# Games From Folktales

A free podcast for the Ars Magica roleplaying game

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January - March 2022

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# Clothing and spycraft for Magonomia

I started to write an article on trick gadgets for Magonomia, but I need to step back a little and give some basic information. Much as I'd need to explain what a cummerbund was if writing up James Bond's gear, I need to define some terms as we go through, so the potential of clothing being tricked out becomes obvious. I'd like to mark this is very basic material, and suggest if you want to wade in, there's a brilliant page at http://www.elizabethancostume.net/ which will let you fill your boots.

First, be aware that Elizabethans try not to launder their fancier clothes. Every time you launder your clothes you are damaging them, and costing yourself money. This is why all of the clothes you'll see below have really extensive sets of undecorated undergarments. You can launder those without much worry, and you can replace them far more easily than outerwear. Similarly, you'll see that the collars and sleeves of many garments come off. That's so that you can launder and replace them without damaging the expensive panels of outer fabric. Strangely this doesn't make them as stinky as you'd imagine. This is why the Queen, her favourites, and faeries wear white linen clothes: it's a sign of ridiculous wealth.

Let's start at the head.

Every woman wears something that covers her hair, for the sake of modesty. At its simplest. this a coif. A coif is a cloth cap which has a supporting wire, or layer of stiffened fabric, at the hairline. Coifs are wool, unless your husband is very rich, in which case you might be allowed silk. That front band of the coif gives us some potential for mischief: for example the wire there could be used as a lockpick. The front band could be used to smuggle a small note. Generally though the coif is too tight to hide much The coif also acts as an undergarment for a hood..

Hoods tend to be worn by better-off women. There has been a relatively recent change in fashion, early in the reign, so that older, conservative women wear the English (or "gable") hood and younger women, or the more courtly, wear French hoods. I'd suggest if you have magic items to protect or extend the mind, made for women, the recent change in fashion means they are more likely to be the older style than the newer. The gable hood looks like a little box or house on the head, and has panels which might be decorated. The sides are called lappets. A French hood is the one you are used to seeing in the art of the time: it allows you to see the front of the hair (which was considered a bit racy). It gets smaller and worn further back over time. There's a black veil on the back of a French hood, and on the back of the late gable hoods there are two tubes of fabric that flow down the back in a v shape, but can be pinned in various ways to make headdresses. One little variation is like a French hood, but has a sort of heart shape to the line above the brow. Mary Queen of Scots used to rock these,

The snoods you see at Renaissance fairs are, sadly, not of the period. Then again, I'm not going to knock down your door with a warrant from the Fashion Police, Renaissance Branch.

Lower class men wear coifs, generally black, but these are supplemented by a flat hat. By law you need to wear a woollen one to church on Sunday, to keep the wool price up. Hats are worn both indoors and out, but at home you might just wear a sort of trinagular sleeve that looks like a Victorian nightcap. Rich men have flat hats, but as time goes on they start getting a more structure and height, becoming very tall by the end of the reign. They have jewels or feathers as an ornaments.

Hair is worn short and parted at the centre for much of the reign. Wigs are common, but they are not powdered white at this stage. Styles get longer as the reign continues. Early on, the habit of plucking or shaving the hairline to make the brow look taller was common, but late in the reign bangs come in. A brief word on beards: once starch becomes easily available, it lets men work on all kinds of weird beards. One I'd note in particular is the spade beard, which was though very martial.

Make up is used by both sexes. Basically, your goal is to look like the Queen. Well, not the actual Queen, the official queen. So, young, flawless and very pale. Basically try not to look Spanish. This is why when you look at portraits of Lord Dudley he looks like the Queen's brother. The main weapon in looking flawless is white paint called ceruse, which is made of a mixture of lead and vinegar. Its so toxic it'll give you boils and if you swallow enough it drives you mad, then kills you. Some people are also bled to get rid of redness in their faces. Other substances were used to add blush and redden lips. Kohl was used to outline the eyes. Fingernails are polished with a mixture of blood and pig fat, which smells about as bad as you imagine. Men paint out their bald spots or wear wigs – hairlessness is seen as a symptom of sickness.

To oversimplify: the basic clothes for women start with a linen smock. Then a petticoat is added. This is usually linked to a bodice, which laced at the side, or in a spiral up the back. The French and Italians did have front-lacing bodices, so if you want one, just be fashion forward. Above this is a gown which is open enough that the petticoat is visible beneath at the neck, and is short enough so the edges of the petticoat are visible at the base. These visible bits are more heavily decorated than the rest. In some cases, there's an extra, triangular,

garment is added to the neck area, called a partlet, to make that look more expensive. Partlets and matching sleeves are mentioned as Chrismas gifts.

The skirt's shape, in noble women, is guided by a hoop frame called a farthingale. This can be made of reeds or baleen. Over this is worn a riding cloak, if needed. In Ars Magica, metal rings are really useful for certain types of magic, so I wanted to note that a farthingale hoop counts and is rather larger than most of the rings available to the well-dressed courtier.

Men's garments start with a shirt (linen for rich guys) and over that is worn a doublet. This can have boning in it to help men have the desired shape. Doublets have sleeves that, in some cases, are only laced on so they can be removed for separate laundering. Over this a jerkin might be worn. The jerkin is a sort of sleeveless vest. Doublets and jerkins become brighter as the reign goes on, as rich fabrics and dyes are a sign of status. The waist of these garments form a V shape that points toward the genitals. The structured garments reinforce this shape. Late in the reign the peascod belly becomes fashionable. This is a pad that makes the man look fat and thus opulent. You could argue that it's not to make you look fat, it is to copy the cut of a an armoured chestplate.

Outside all of this, in wet weather, you'd wear a hooded cloak. The lengths vary, but people riding long distances use ankle length ones, and women have stays which tied to their shoes, so stop the cloak flaring. Cloaks for daywear are more ornamental, have wider shoulders, and can be as short as the groin. Most are between the knee and ankle.

On the way through we've skipped the ruff. Ruffs are, in essence, a detachable collar. They are also, in a slight way, a posture trainer: when you are wearing one you need to keep your neck raised and stare down your nose at people. They become popular once a Dutch immigrant brings over the techniques for making starch in commercial quantities. We often think of them as white, but blue was also a popular colour. Poor people do not wear ruffs, because they are both silly and expensive. Ruffled cuffs match the neck ruff, and similarly are not for people who actually do things with their hands.

While discussing things poor people do not wear, I was surprised to learn that the Venetian moretta has a parent in England. Rich women going horse-riding wear a black velvet mask to prevent facial tanning. These "vizards" are held in place by clamping a bead in the mouth, but unlike the moretta, they have a mouth hole, and it's possible to speak while using one.

People wear woollen stockings held in place with ribbon garters. These are called "hose" but they don't necessarily join at the top like modern pantyhose. For men, assume they wear hose on the lower legs and, over them, breeches at the top of the legs. The fashion here changes a heap, but in Elizabeth's time, assume that courtiers have long hose and tiny shorts. The Queen knows what she likes. For men, when the doublet is short, there's an extra flap or pouch, called a codpiece, which holds or hides the genitals. Some men wear two different coloured hose, or hose which have stripped panes of colour. These are called pansied hose and draw attention to how hot your legs are. In the upper class, this is almost exclusively a guy thing. Venetian hose are odd in that they have pockets in the seams. People don't expect it, so…good place to hide stuff.

People wear boots in the muck and slippers indoors. Men wear shoes a bit more because they are out and about. Shoes tie over the instep.

Rich people wear gloves – poor people do not unless it is for warmth, and that's more of a mitten situation. The problem with gloves is people can't see the cool rings you have on your fingers, so, cut-off gloves are used later by some people.

Folding fans are a late thing – the fans they have earlier are made, by preference, of ostrich feathers which are imported from North Africa. People wear sables, called "flea furs" by people into costumery, and I'm not sure where that name comes form.

Women wear earrings. Men wear single earrings, but I'm not sure if that's considered a naval thing yet. Some put a line of black fabric through their ear instead.

I can't see any note, in my shallow search, about waist belts, but Dudley is wearing one in his favourite portrait. I do see men having baldrics which are a sort of shoulder strap. It can be used to hold a sword, but it can also support pouches and tools. It could also hold a brace of pistols, but the legalities there are tricky and need their own post eventually. After the assassinations of Moray in Scotland (1570) and William the Silent in Holland (1584) the Queen's court freaks out about assassins getting close to Elizabeth with a pistol. Legally you can only carry one if you have an income of 100 pounds a year, and the barrel is at least a yard long. That being said, the law's enforcement away from the Queen is terrible, and no sensible person would ride the countryside without obviously having a brace of pistols. You need several because you don't want to have to reload in battle.

# Magonomia : Elizabethan pistols

Lets talk Elizabethan guns. Pistols aren't great in the start of the reign. The problem isn't range or accuracy, both of which are bad, but they still trump swords and daggers in close combat, so that gives them a use case, the problem is the trigger mechanism. Early pistols are matchlocks. Time for some engineering.

A matchlock pistol has trigger which, when pulled lowers a twisted metal piece, called a serpentine, toward a small pan, which contains gunpowder. A flame on the end of the serpentine ignites the powder in the pan. The flame goes through a small hole in the end of the pan to the barrel, ignites the powder within, and forces the ball explosively forward.

So, there are many problems here. The first is, how do I light the flame at the end of my serpentine? The method that has evolved is to clamp a piece of slow-burning, chemical-permeated rope, which is referred to as "match", at the serpentine's end. Slowmatch burns at about a foot an hour, so if you have plenty of match and some warning, you can ready your gun in advance. That being said, permanent readiness is expensive: a sentry can go through a mile of match in a year. Some people who do not want to be caught suddenly in a firefight keep a case with a piece of slowmatch in it, so they can use it to light the one already clamped to the top of their pistol. Coachmen, for example.

This arrangement is less useful for covert action than it initially appears. The ember at the end of the match is very visible at night. Slowmatch causes smoke and has a distinctive smell. later, the pirate Blackbeard used to tie bits of burning match to himself before battle, to appear infernal. A related problem is that the powder is the pan is exposed: it can fall out if the gun is jostled, and if the weather is wet, or even humid, it can fail to light. As a spy, it's all very well to have a gun and a slowmatch case, but being smoky, smelly and having to keep your gun upright, or load it before shooting at someone, is all kinds of impractical.

The spell "Spark of Magic" (Core rules p. 230) gets around the lighting problem by providing you with an intelligent fire sprite you can direct. You need to keep the fire sprite in a clay jar, and I'd personally work that into the handle or stock of my firearm. It also lets you play merry heck with the following some kinds of guns listed later, if you assume the sprite is strong enough to lift the pan covers on guns. The rules say it can cause misfires, but it doesn't emphasise that the problem with misfires aren't just that the shot is wasted, its that if the sprite is patient or can tip the barrel slightly, the shot likely goes into your leg, or the shoulder of your horse. There are safety features on many of the following guns, but they work by preventing flint, steel and powder coming together. The fire sprite bypasses that.

Enter the wheellock, and this all changes. The wheellock appears about 1500, so it is well known in the reign. The being said wheel locks are double the cost of matchlocks and are fragile, so they aren't used on campaign, save as cavalry and officer sidearms. They are used in some early assassinations though, and there are a few court cases where people accidentally kill their victims because they think the gun is safe, because there is no burning match.

When you pull the trigger of a wheel lock, a hardened steel wheel on a spring begins to spin within the pan. The serpentine drops a chunk of pyrite onto the wheel, and it sprays sparks downward onto the pan. Cleverly, the pan also often has a cover which is retracted by the trigger mechanism. You can, in short, have a pocket full of death. You don't smoke, smell or need to fear the rain. Reloading requires a weird sort of key to wind the spring on the wheel, but if you are an assassin, you only get one shot with surprise: it's still as loud as a matchlock. Carry more than one, if you like.

One odd feature is that when you hold a wheel lock, it works slightly better if you tilt it off vertical. This is because the sparks off the wheel are gravity-fed to the pan. If the sparks fall to the side of the wheel, rather than at the foot of the wheel, they hit more of the powder in the pan. By tilting the gun slightly you make that offset.

The fix for the problems of the wheellock, the snaplock, appears early in the Reign, roughly 1540. Basically in a snaplock the serpentine is replaced by a differently shaped bit of metal called a cock, tipped with a piece of flint. The trigger releases a spring, so that the cock moves forward, pushing the flint along a bit of curved steel, spraying sparks downwards into the pan. You don't need to pull out a sort of Renaissance Allen key to reload. It costs about 50% more than a matchlock, which is substantially les than a wheel lock. Many have little, manual, pan covers so you can shove them in your pants and swing on ropes, pirate style, and they probably won't either go off or spill their powder. The pan does not, however, automatically retract: that appears in the next iteration, the snaphance, which is popular after 1560. True flintlocks appear after 1610. Their main feature is that the striking steel and pan cover are a single piece of metal. That being said, people in the period don't use our modern terms. Spanish people call all of the flinty things "rake locks" for most of the period.

There is another intermediate form, the miquelet, which is popular in Spain and Italy late in the Reign. It's called the Mediterranean lock in English for a while. Its presence in London is innately suspicious.

# Magonomia – The Anglo-Moroccan Alliance

If we were doing a proper product here, I would not be the guy to write this: I know at least two of the old Ars Magica gang who would be better choices. That being said, there are plot hooks here we can use, and I'd like to flag them for your table.

So, in the Magonomia period, the political centre of Europe is Spain. They're the super-power around which the calculations of other powers orbit. This means if you are a minor power, like England, there aren't many things you can do directly to the Spanish. England chooses defensive war, ordnance smuggled to rebellious Spanish provinces, and asymetric warfare. For this strategy to work, they need a heap of gunpowder. At the peak of consumption in the Reign, Elizabeth's people get through 100 tons of gunpowder a year. Toward the end of the reign, the recipe for this is six parts salpetre, one part charcoal, one part sulphur. Charcoal is made locally, and sulphur can be found locally, and bought in bulk in Italy. The English don't, however, have a native source of saltpetre. It's only found in, in bulk, in two places in Western Europe: Spain and Montpellier in France.

You can make your own, with a mixture of time, dung, urine and clay. I believe this was only bought into England during Elizabeth's reign: that she purchased a German book on how to grow nitre. So it's an Arabic (well, Chinese – the Arabic name translates as "Chinese snow") alchemical secret which got loose in Germany and her people bought it. There were plans for great manufactories, but they came to nothing. By the end of the reign about 10% of England's saltpetre comes from manufacture.

Alternatively you can grab it where it naturally forms, which is on the walls of caves, cellars, stables and dovecotes. Basically anywhere dark, dry and full of animal poop. This is what Elizabeth's people mostly do. Basically there are licensed saltpetremen who get to raid your barns and if you don't like it, well, tough it out. By the end of the reign, 30% of the realm's saltpetre comes from collectors.

The other 60 percent is imported, and the Elizabethans get it from Morocco. They trade naval grade timber, artillery and cannonballs for saltpetre. The Spanish, who, are slightly to the north of Morocco and have regular wars and piratical clashes with them, hate this. They, and the other Catholic powers, say that arming the Muslims is deeply wrong, but how seriously they take that varies. The Venetians literally don't care. The French say it is terrible, but like that it stops the Spanish pushing them around. The Portuguese say it is terrible, but want to use Moroccan and English armies to take back their capital from the Spanish. In 1585 the Queen grants a trade monopoly to the Barbary Corporation, which has investors through the genteel class of England, making the alliance popular there.

The leader of Morocco, late in the reign, is Ahmad al-Masur. He reigns from Marrakesh and collects magical texts. He's an ally of England for over twenty years. In 1600 he even sends ambassadors to the Elizabethan court. His plan is to maintain the friendship with the English and draw them into more direct strikes against Spain. Elizabeth doesn't believe he'll cover his side of the deal, which is basically that he'll send an army to invade Portugal (under Spanish rule) if the English send a fleet to transport them and money to defray the costs. He even offers the English a castle in Morocco. They never manage a serious joint operation, but Morocco does continue to provide shelter and resupply for English pirates.

As a little side note – this is also where all the ostrich feathers you see in English heraldry and courtly dress come from. They are imported as a secondary cargo from Morroco.

Some more recent scholarship claims that Al-Mansur wanted to settle and conquer the Americas. His empire had, recently, successfully headed south into the Songhai Empire to ensure its supply of gold. His plan, to battle the Spaniards for the New World, in concert with English naval power, makes for an interesting campaign frame.

# Magonomia:
# The inadvisability of a carriage as a getaway vehicle

In early Elizabeth's England, if you want to make a fast getaway, you use a horse, except if you are in London, where you slope down to the river and embark surreptitiously, with the help of a convenient waterman. You don't, surprisingly, use a carriage. That being said, at the end I'll discuss some ways to trick out a carriage.

Initially the lack of carriages is purely technological: no-one has them in England before 1555. They did have working vehicles like drays and wagons. For transport they have huge carts, richly furnished and slow as molasses, that are used for parades and royal progresses. These were the descendants of a Saxon invention, which was basically a wagon with a hammock in it for moving people to frail to ride. Americans thinking of the carts in Oregon Trail aren't far off – just add a lot of fabric and gild anything that's still visible.

Even after the earliest carriages are bought into England, they are not popular in some circles. Part of the reason for this is practical: the roads are terrible and suspension is rudimentary. The second, is that they are initially considered effeminate, and then later considered debauched. One poet, slightly after the reign, asked if it was carriages which popularized tobacco or the other way around. So, they do become available as conveyances late in the reign. Like so many other industries, carriagemaking takes a leap forward when all of the Dutch refugees show up and establish new manufactures, following the war of independence with Spain.

Another problem is mechanical. Steering systems are rudimentary. On a fixed axle, the wheels can't move at different speeds without slippage, so cornering is slow and wide compared to modern vehicles, even modern carriages. Single-axle carts can be a bit more nimble because effectively they sway about on the traces between the animals drawing the cart and the vehicle. Having multiple fixed axles makes this far worse. That doesn't matter on drays carting crops, but it does create a problem for a dashing agent wanting to tear around a corner while flinging smoke bombs at her foes.

The earliest, and by the end of the reign, really only, solution was to mount the front axle on a pin, so that the front two wheels could swivel to follow the horses pulling the carriage. This has a couple of problems though. It compromises the tray of the wagon, and it makes it unstable.

The surface area of a wagon's tray determines how much stuff it can carry, and therefore how much cargo you could haul per trip. Once you've decided that your cargo is actually some people in seats, you can make the axles a bit longer than the tray of the wagon to give yourself some more room to manoeuvre. You can also make the body of the carriage "waisted" that is, have it narrower where the wheels are. Some carriages are narrower from the bottom to the top (which makes them even more top-heavy than you'd image), while some are wider at the back (since the rear axle does not steer). Eventually, in later carriages, the front axle is moved so far forward of the passenger box that part of the wheels can go under the body of the carriage. Another thing you can do is make the front wheels smaller. This again lets you get them closer to a full rotation in the space you have between them being parallel to and them striking the side of the carriage (or the guard that stops that happening). This also helps in designs where the axle has been moved forward: small wheels can go under the connection

The second problem is that from a stability perspective, you've basically turned the carriage into a big tricycle. On a wagon with two dead axles, when you hit a pothole with one of the forward wheels, that wheel dips a bit, but your other front wheel acts as a sort of drag to stop it being knocked too far off line. With a pivoting front axle, things work the other way: hitting a pothole means both of your front wheels swerve. This is why in carriages, the person of honour sits at the back facing forwards: they get jolted about less. Similarly, if you are struck in an accident, your wheels aren't necessarily holding the corners of the carriage up: effectively they are holding up a top-heavy "T" shape. This is why so many carriages flip over, even in what modern people would consider low speed collisions.

Time to crack out the really weird bit of history. If you don't want to ride, what's the posh way of getting from place to place early on? The horse litter. A horse litter is basically a carriage, but instead of wheels it has a horse at the front and back. This uses the knees of the horses as shock absorbers, so it's considered far more suitable for ladies and the unwell. Sometimes they are lead by a man who is walking, sometimes the front horse has a rider. Sometimes the rear horse is replaced by people, but that's really fancy and pointless for actual travel. It's how Catherine of Aragon entered London though – horse at the front and eight guys at the back.

Elizabeth did have a carriage (actually, it might have been a coach, which is basically a carriage with four corner posts). Its sides were made of wicker and the panels could be peeled so she was visible to people. There wasn't any coach glazing at the time, so there was no view directly forward for the passengers. It was likely

slow, as it was drawn by two horses. Coaches with six horses weren't known in England until the reign of James I, so there was no careening about. It was also profoundly uncomfortable: the box (where the passengers sit) was probably hanging on chains or leather straps rather than directly to the axle, but they still are terrible. Elizabeth used to ride to places, then switch to her coach for parades, then swap back.

As an example, Elizabeth II has a gilded coach for state occasions which weighs four tons, and is so uncomfortable to ride in that we have testimony at how terrible it is from four monarchs. When people who have done blue water naval service in wooden ships tell you this was the worst ride of their life, it must have been terrible. Liz Two refused to use it in her latest Jubilee parade because she's in her eighties. This is presumably why her new coaches have modern shock absorbers, air conditioning and power windows: because she already has one that's historical but rubbish.

The source I'm using (Carriages and Coaches: Their History and Evolution by Ralph Straus) says that *"by 1585 many of the nobility and some wealthy commoners owned private coaches, and, indeed, certain enterprising tradesmen, as will appear, let other coaches on hire at so much per day…Indeed, every one of any wealth was eager to possess them. A private coach settled any doubts as to your quality. It was a new fashion, a new excitement…From such details it is possible to imagine what this and other coaches of the time were like. You figure a huge, gaudy, curtained apparatus with projecting sides and incomplete panels, large enough to contain a fair-sized bed, hung roughly from four posts, and capable of being dragged at little better than a snail's pace—"four-wheeled Tortoyses" Taylor calls them—along roads hardly worthy of the name. Twenty miles a day was considered good going.*

*The coachman, as we learn from the water-poet, was "mounted (his fellow-horses and himselfe being all in a finery) with as many varieties of laces, facings, Clothes and Colours as are in the Rainebowe." Nor was he over-polite, particularly if the coach he drove was hired.*

I'd break in at this point to note that although you could have your coach kept somewhere for your use when required., or you could hire a coach by the day, ranks of hackney coaches, for hire by the trip, don't appear before 1633, with the first one being in the Strand. At least that's in England: over in France they seem to have sprung up in front of popular taverns, so they have much the same system we use in Australia today. Back to our Straus.

*They seem to have thought that their finery allowed them to treat the pedestrians with but scant respect. And no wonder these "way-stopping whirligigges," as Taylor calls the coaches, surprised the inhabitants. When one of them was seen for the first time, "some said it was a great Crab-shell brought out of China, and some imagin'd it to be one of the Pagan Temples in which the Cannibals adored the devill." For some time, indeed, the coaches must have given the common folk something to think about.. In fact, the coach, according to poor Taylor, is directly responsible for every calamity from which the country has suffered since its introduction. Leather has become dearer, the horses in their traces are being prostituted, and there is a "universal decay of the best ash-trees."*

As an aside, sedan chairs seem to date from around Elizabeth's death. The historian I'm quoting doubtfully records it as being due to Buckingham again, saying he saw them in Spain when he visited it with Prince Charles and bought three back with him, supposedly. Eventually Sir Saunder Durcombe, who was an ally of Buckingham's, is given a sedan chair monopoly for fourteen years. At much the same time, coaches were banned from London's streets unless the occupants were traveling at least three miles beyond the city. This was profitable for a while, but people then just started ignoring the law about coaches.

Note that right of way is odd at this time: basically "Rich Dudes Go First", based on the idea of precedence. There's a humorous pamphlet put out about how a sedan chair operator and a coachman are arguing who should wait for the other, on the basis that the coach is in the service or a duke, but that the chair is not empty but contains an actual knight at the very moment. After a morning's argument a beer cart (a two-wheeler) claims precedence over both of them, as having come to the country in the time of Henry VII, and being of far greater use. You'll note that by Sherlock Holmes's time, hackney cabs were also two wheelers? It makes them better able to navigate around coaches in traffic.

# Tricking out your carriage

The first thing to consider is where you might stash equipment in a carriage. By tradition, a lone driver carries a gun within his seat, and if he has a driving partner, they sit up front with a gun. The shotgun has, however, not yet been invented, so you can't call shotgun on the seat outside. The box in which passengers ride also provides space for mechanisms and armaments, although line of sight to fire is not particularly good. The roof of the carriage could be used to store material, or could have a hole in it to allow material inside to be dispensed. At the back many carriages have a storage box, the ancestor of the modern car boot, which might also have destructive elements. A difference from the modern car that might be useful is that carriages have a very high comparative clearance. The carriage doesn't need a drive shaft or fuel tank, so there's a lot of free space under the floor, between the axles.

As to what your weapons need do: carriages are already terrible, so you just need to make them slightly worse.

Making the road slippery, making it difficult to see and making it hard to steer may all work, without the need to shoot the coachman. You can't shot out the tyres of a coach, because it doesn't have them: wheels are made of wood with little metal plates nailed on. Steel hoops around wheels haven't been invented yet. You can, however, crack a wheel spoke, and that can cause dangerous accidents, because the carriage is, again, top-heavy and unstable.

A problem with using a carriage as a weapons platform is that horses spook very easily, even some trained horses. Modern horses are perfectly willing to shy at a shadow or a piece of litter, which is why they wear blinders to stop them seeing peripherally. Their forebears were even likely to bolt if they heard a sudden explosion behind them. People may imagine that carriage accidents were rare, because horses will not, for example, run themselves into walls, but the opposite is the case: horses, when startled, don't really think things through at all. They just run and hope for the best. In a chase scene you might not be too bothered by your horses sprinting, but it makes steering wider and worse, and it uses up your horse's energy, so you can't sprint again until your horses has caught its breath. There are ways to make horses go faster artificially – various tonics used by horseleeches to win races, but during the thick of combat or the dash of the chase, do you want to be trying to force ginger into your horse's bottom?

# Pentamerone

## Sapia

Sapia, to me, seems like an early version of the The Taming of the Shrew story, but it ends with a stronger reconciliation. Then again, the Taming of the Shrew has an unofficial sequel (The Woman's Prize by John Fletcher). Let's start with Burton's faux-Jacobean synopsis: "Sapia, daughter of a baroness, teacheth Cenzullo. the son of a king, who will not understand or keep in mind the alphabetical letters, to be prudent ; but receiving a buffet from her, and willing to be revenged, he taketh her to wife, and after a thousand outrages, she having presented him, without his knowledge, with three children, they become reconciled and united."

The king of Closed Castle has only one son, Carluccio, who is a blockhead. He refuses to learn to read. If anyone speaks to him of learning, he goes wild and acts like a madman. He becomes immune to words, blows and threats. The king things you can't be unwise and a king simultaneously, so he looks for options.

The Baroness Cenza has a daughter who is so learned that at thirteen she gained the nickname Sapia, which means "wise woman". I'd note this is where we get the modern name "Sophia". The king sends his son to be fostered by the baroness, hoping some of the girl's wisdom will rub off via her 'company and example."

Sapia tries to teach the prince the sign of the cross. He fails to learn it, perhaps deliberately. Deciding that kindness is useless with this student, Sapia clips him around the ear. Carluccio is ashamed. His spite is s strong it takes him only a few months to learn to read, and a few more to to pass his grammar. The king is pleased and sends the prince off to a seat of higher learning, to continue his studies. He becomes one of the wisest men in the kingdom, but can't let go of his desire to be avenged. He dreams of humiliating Sapia, and vows to have his satisfaction, or to die. So, he's a really horrible stalker and he's the hero. Imagine what happens in the stories I won't read.

When Sapia comes of age, the prince says to his Dad "I know you want me to marry some foreign noble, and I know I owe you everything, but as an indulgence, I'd like to marry Sapia. I know of no other way to repay her for my knowledge." The king weighs this up, and says that even if her status is low, her character is so good that it makes her a suitable match. He sends for the baroness, and they hammer out a marriage contract for their children and throw a wedding feast.

The prince then says "Hey, Dad, I need my own pad." and the king makes him a palace. He locks Sapia in it, starves her and annoys her as much as possible. .Eventually he goes in and asks how she is. She asks why he married her if she wanted to treat her so badly. He says it's revenge for the slight she gave him as a tutor. She tells him he's an idiot and a tyrant, so he leaves her and makes her conditions worse. He then takes a few days and asks again. She hasn't changed her opinion.

The king then dies, and so the prince leaves to claim the throne, with his retinue. The baroness, who has heard what's happening to her daughter, has been arranging a jailbreak via a tunnel. I'd put the PCs in here as her agents. The baroness kits her daughter out with retainers and luxurious carriages, then uses a short cut (ahem, let's say magic) to make sure she reaches the capital first, and rents out the palace opposite the kings. Who are these people who are renting out palaces?

The new king falls in love with the beautiful neighbour, gets her pregnant and gives her a necklace to remember him by. He then goes on a royal progress. Sapia heads home and gives birth, but she's doing better because she can smuggle in supplies through the tunnel. Her husband arrives, hoping she's died, because he wants to marry the hot neighbour from the capital. She tells him again she struck him to make him wise, because he was an ass, and he gets annoyed and leaves for the capital. The same thing happens and he gifts Sapia a rare gem for her hair, and she gets pregnant again. This happens a third time, and so she gets a thick gold chain covered in jewels and a third child.

The last time the prince comes home, Sapia has been giving a sleeping draught by her mother, and is pretending to be dead. They bury Sapia, then pull her out of the ground and smuggle her to the baroness's castle. The king has a short mourning period and then offers to marry his hot neighbour. During the feast she throws herself at his feet and says "Please don't disinherit your kids." then she brings out the three children and explains the whole thing. The prince works out she's wiser than him, and agrees to stop being a monster. This is apparently a happy ending and I hate this author.

## The Five Sons

Pacione sendeth forth five of his sons into the world to learn a craft, and each returneth with some experience; they go to save the daughter of a king stolen by a ghnl, and returning with her, dispute as to who did the greatest deed of prowess so as to be worthy to make her his wife; but the king giveth her to the father, as the parent stem of all these branches.

There's a wealthy merchant named Pacione, and he has five good-for-nothing sons. He gets sick of them sponging off them, so he sends them off to masters to learn trades for a year. After that they return, and he asks what they've learned.

The eldest, Luccio, says ' I have learnt the craft of a rogue, where I became the chief of rogues, and the head-master of thieves, and the fourth in the art of marauding, and thou wilt not find a peer to this body, that can with more dexterity cut off knots, or steal cloaks, or wrap up and cut up washing, catch and lighten pockets, clean and put to rights shops, shake and empty purses, sweep and empty boxes; and wherever I can reach, I can show the miracles of hooking.'

The second is a shipbuilder, the third a crossbowman.

The fourth has learnt of a herb that will cause the dead to rise. His father responds "Bravo, 0 thou priest of I ,anfusa – this should be the time when we should be sa,·ed from want, and cause folk to live longer than the Verlascio of Capua.'

The youngest has learned the language of birds. He tells them that while they have been dining, the birds have told him a princess has been stolen by a ghul and whoever brings her back can have her wife.

"Lets do that, gang" says the eldest and they say "Sure!". Off they truck like a loaded brace of Chekov's pistols. They arrive at the rock and the ghul is having a rest using the breast of princess Cianna as a pillow. They pop a big rock under the ghul's head and race off. The ghul wakes as they are rowing away, and turns himself into a dark cloud to peruse them. The crossbowman hits the cloud right between the eyes, which gives the ghul such a headache he falls in the water. Yes, I know clouds don't have eyes.

When they turn back to check on Cianna, she's dead. She's not wounded in aqny way, she'sw just cold and gone. The leader of the group carries on for half a page, tearing his beard and speaking in elegant variations until his brother stops him and says they can give the body to the sultan, and then flee quickly in case he's angry. Some of the others agree this is the best plan.

Then another brother points out that he can literally raise the dead, and wonders how his brothers could have failed to register that, because it's pretty marvellous. I mean, being a crossbowman or a shipwright is good, but how many guys do you know who can raise the dead? One. He tells them to row for shore and let him look for the herb that revives. Oddly he finds the herb within minutes of first landfall, so it must be locally endemic. The brother squeezes the juice in Cianna's mouth and she's returned to life.

They get back to the Sultan's court with no further use of their talents. Weird, if you were the guy who was the Prince of Thieves in this scenario, you'd be annoyed that there was no time in the spotlight for you. The Sultan needs to decide who to give the girl to as wife, and the thiefly one, who has been leading the expedition, says to give her to the one who did the most work. The Sultan thinks that's just and the author dresses this up as a ploy by the leader, but honestly I think the shipwright who did all the sailing of the boat may have put the most sweat into the venture. Each of them relates their role. Finally the king says to Pacione "What's your opinion.?"

He says "They are my sons, and without me they'd be idiots. I forced them to learn all of their crafts." The sultan says that sounds fair to him, and the boys now have a new mother. Awkward. The sons are given money and the father a new lease of life. He says the moral "Between two disputants, the third rejoiceth."

# The Garlic Patch

Let's lead out with Burton's summary:
Belluccia, daughter of Ambruoso de Ia Varra, being obedient to her father, and acting prudently in his commands, becometh the wife of a rich youth. Narduccio hight, the first-born of Biasillo Guallecchia. Her sisters, being poor, are dowered by Biasillo, and given in marriage to his other sons.

There was a farmer, called Ambruoso, who was very poor. HJe had only a forest of garlic to his name, and he had seven daughters to support. His best friend, Biasillo, was rich and had seven sons. Now, in the parts of Central Queensland I was raised in, there would have been a pretty obvious ending to this story right here, but sexism raises its ugly head.

Biasillio's eldest son, Narduccio, who he loves the most, because medieval people are monsters, gets deathly ill. No amount of money spent on cures seems to help. The father asks his friend, "Do you have kids?". Ambruso is so embarrassed that he has daughters lies, and says he has fours sons and three daughters. Basillio says "You'd be doing me a great favour if you sent one of your sons to cheer mine up."

Ambrusio, instead of saying "I'm a bit sexist and lied." instead goes home to his girls and asks each one to cut her hair, dress like a man, and pretend to be male, to keep the handsome, rich bachelor company. In a distinct show of spirit, the first six tell him no. His eldest says that cutting hair is a sign of mourning, and she'll chop hers off when he dies. So – over his dead body. The second says she's not even married, so she won't she cut her hair like a widow. The third says she has always been told that women should never wear breeches. The fourth one does a quick cat impersonation and says she won't fish for cures where the chemists have failed. The fifth says to tell the man to cure himself, for she won't give a single

hair for “a hundred threads of men’s lilacs.” The sixth says she was born a woman, and will live and die a woman. The seventh, a shy and retiring girl, knows the rest of her sisters have refused, so she says yes. She says that if her father needs it, she’d be willing to change shape into an animal. They cut off her blond hair, and put her in an old coat, then head for Resina, where Biasillo lives.

Narduccio, not being an idiot, sees that his new companion is a woman. He thinks she’s been sent as a marital snare, and this makes him sad. His condition worsens. His mother, Cola, then goes on about how much she loves him for a couple of paragraphs, to get him to spill the beans. Narduccio says he believes his new companion’s a woman, and unless he can marry her he’s decided to die. Oddly, his mother does not tell him to wake up to himself, but plots to discover if “the land is cropped or full of trees”. You’ll need to pardon me here, but “full of trees”? How many trees is a man supposed to have in his trousers? let’s move on.

The mother designs a test. She tells Narduccio to send his new companion to ride their wildest pony. If she’s a woman, she’ll go white and nearly faint from fear, apparently. This plan falls before Belluccia’s Olympic-standard dressage skills, and Cola says to her son “Look, clearly that’s a guy. He’s the best horseman anyone’s seen.” Narduccio is still convinced, so strongly that “not even Scannarebecco” can drive it from his head. Presumably that’s one of the popular biographies of the Skanderbeg? He was a bit of a literary hit in the Fifteenth Century. His mother sees he’s still obsessed and comes up with a second test.

The mother sends for a gun, and demands Belluccia load and shoot. She does, and Narduccio, discovering that he has a kink for pentathletes, is filled with longing and desire. The mother says to her son “Women can’t do that.” and her son answers with some sexual wordplay, saying if this graceful tree will give him a fig, he’ll give a fig to all the doctors. The fig, here, is representative of female genitalia, and a rude hand gesture that is meant to look like genitalia. He also says that he will lose strength daily until he has her, and if her cannot find his way to a pit, he will fall into another kind of pit. This mother and son, it seems, are sex positive to the point of having no boundaries.

The mother returns with more wordplay, but the basic idea is to go swimming with him and see if he has a Circus Maximus or a Trajan’s Column. He continues the wordplay, but by this stage its really tedious to a modern reader. This must have been edgy stuff at the time. Narduccio gets one of his father’s apprentices to hide in the bushes, with instructions to come out while they are swimming and tell the Bellucia her father is dying and that she needs to rush to his bedside, so she will run out of the water to get dressed. The apprentice mistimes it, so that they haven’t fully undressed, let alone entered the water, before delivering the message. She leaves, and Narduccio apparently gets both anemia and jaundice for the lack of her.

His mother saves his life by pointing out he can just go to her father’s house and rush in impolitely, so she doesn’t have time to change gear if she’s a woman. He recovers some colour and goes off to try the plan, but the father manages to delay him, and Bellucia changes her clothes. Fortunately for the reader, she forgets to take out her earrings, so her gender is revealed. Narduccio asks Bellucia to marry him and her father answers “If you’re father’s good with it, I’m a hundred times good with it” which is horrible, because we never hear Bellucia say “Yes.” Still, she seems up for it, in the story, so they go to his dad’s house.

He’s fine with it. Biasilio’s just puzzled by all the crossdressing. When his friend explains he didn’t want to be known as “such an ass that Heaven sent him seven daughters”, Biasillo decides that the best way to sort all of this out, given that he’s rich and has way too many sons, is to just marry all of them off in a single service. This saves him money on weddings, or course, but I presume he saw what a whiny pain in the arse his oldest was, and decided he wasn’t going to put up with that every year or so for the next six years. We end on a wedding and a big dance number. So, it’s better than “Seven Brides for Seven Brothers”, which was where I thought we’d end up.

Why its called the Garlic Patch I don’t know. It’s probably some sort of double entendre.

# Rosella

Burton’s take on this is “A sultan is recommended to bathe in the blood of a great lord, and he sendeth his folk to seize a prince. His daughter falleth in love with the prisoner, and they fly together; her mother followeth them, and her hands are cut off. She dieth with grief, cursing her daughter, so that the prince forgetteth her. After various ruses and tricks played by her, her husband remembereth her once more, and they live and enjoy themselves happily together.”

There was a Sultan with leprosy, and that his doctors could not cure. They told him to do an impossible thing, so that their professional standing would not be harmed. Bathe, they advised, in the blood of a great prince. The Sultan sent out his fleet and network of agents, and eventually they kidnap Paoluccio, te Prince of Fonte-Chiaro. They take him to Constantinople (so this story is set after the invasion).

The doctors get together and agree that when the Sultan bathes in the blood, and the cure fails, they are for it. “Sorry chief.”, they say, “He’s so sad at being captured its made his blood melancholic. No good for leprosy, that melancholic blood. You need to give him time to chill out and brighten up. Get him to be sanguine and you’ll be apples, boss. He needs good food and fine company.

Party on, my Sultan. Party on.” Then if they have any sense they sell everything and move to Alexandria.

The Sultan believes this seems fair enough, and so puts the prince in a paradisal garden, where it is always spring and there are beautiful fountains. Birds call, cool breezes blow. The Sultan also send his gorgeous daughter, Rosella, with the implication the prince may marry her at some point. This gets the blood pumping, but in a twist that the Sultan did not see coming because he’s genre blind, his daughter falls of the captive.

The lad having perked up, the Sultan gets the doctors, who still haven’t headed for the hills, and tells them its time for his bath. Rosella discovers the whole plan via the arts of geomancy taught her by her mother. She’s not well pleased, and gives her beau an enchanted sword and a warning. She says to him “Head for the coast, and because of this sword, the sailors will treat you like an emperor. Hide out and wait for me.” Paoluccio, given his previous option was becoming bodywash, gets right on that plan and flees. Rosella casts a spell upon a paper and slides into her mother’s pocket, so that falls deep asleep. Then she collects a a large bundle of jewels and other valuables, and high-tails it to the boat.

The Sultan goes to the garden. No prince. No daughter. He can’t wake his wife even by pulling her nose. He calls her handmaidens and says “The Queen’s had a fit, give her a cool bath”. When they undress her, the spell is broken. She’s not well pleased. She runs to the sea, throws a leaf on the water, and turns it into a ship. She gives chase.

Rosella can’t see her mother yet, but she knows she’s coming. She says “Hey, Paul. Go stand in the stern and when you hear grappling chains, shut your eyes and just go to town with the sword, OK? I mean, just wreck anything that comes in reach.” In a lucky hit, when the battle is joined, he slashes off the sultana’s hands. She heads home, and has some final words to the king, and then her spirit goes to pay the one who taught her the dark arts. The Sultan dies of grief.

When the ship arrives at Fonte-Chiaro, Paoluccio says “Wait here while I got tell the ‘rents I’m not dead, and get you an entourage, babe.” As soon as his foot touches ground, however, he forgets Rosella exists. Rosella waits three days, then works out that Paoluccio ‘s had his memory wiped. Time to sort that out. I’m starting to hate this trope, because I feel like this is the third or fourth time we have struck it in the Pentamerone. Rosella rents a palace across from his palace, according to Burton. Is that house palaces work?

Paoluccio is having a heck of a time: feasts and parties and so forth. Sonnets and music and inebriation are the way of things. Rosella tells a knight of high birth that if he bought her a thousand ducats and a nice dress, she’ll give him proof of her affection. He borrowed the money at high interest and handed it over, because he’s a bit of a fool. Rosella meets him in her bedroom and tells him to close the door before he comes to bed. Each time he shuts it, it opens again, and he does this for hours until the day returns. Rosella satirises him as wanting to open her casket of love but not being able to close a door, and he leaves in shame.

The next night she pulls the same trick with a baron, who pawns all of his goods to get the money together. She tells him to blow out the candle and come to bed, but it won’t go out. Each time he blows, his breath acts as bellows and makes it shine brighter. She sends him on his way with mockery. She pulls the same trick on a third night, this time by having the man comb knots from her hair for the entire evening.

Slightly later, one of the men is complaining of his fate in a salon. He is overheard by the mother of one of the other men, and they agree that a problem shared is halved, so they hunt around and find the third. They form a league to seek revenge, and go to the king. He sends for Rosella, and asks “What makes you think I’ll let you get away with this?”

She answers “I did this to avenge a greater wrong.” but in a paragraph, because that’s how the Pentamerone goes. He asks what she’s talking about, and she gives her life story without identifying the prince. The king says that ingratitude is terrible, seats her nobly, and asks for the name of the man who has wronged her. She takes off her ring and says “The one whose finger fits this is the unfaithful traitor who wronged me.” It then flies to the prince’s finger and restores his memory. He begs her forgiveness, and she says that it’s not necessary, because he was under her mother’s curse. The king decides they need to marry right away, but pauses to have Rosella baptised.

I have no idea why she ripped off those three guys.

The moral is “Ever with time and straw thou mayest see the medlar ripen”. Medlars are a fruit that is used as a symbol for the female genitalia in medieval writing. This is a sort of sly joke that no longer lands.

# The murder, the familiar and the flood

In the section which follows, note that everyone is embarrassed to have captured a murderer. They live in an honour culture, rather than a legal culture, and so it seems to them that they are acting unjustly, at least according to the biased narrator.

LI

I WENT on applying myself with the utmost diligence upon the gold-work for Pope Clement's button. He was very eager to have it, and used to send for me two or three times a week, in order to inspect it; and his delight in the work always increased. Often would he rebuke and scold me, as it were, for the great grief in which my brother's loss had plunged me; and one day, observing me more downcast and out of trim than was proper, he cried aloud: "Benvenuto, oh! I did not know that you were mad. Have you only just learned that there is no remedy against death? One would think that you were trying to run after him." When I left the presence, I continued working at the jewel and the dies for the Mint; but I also took to watching the arquebusier who shot my brother, as though he had been a girl I was in love with. The man had formerly been in the light cavalry, but afterwards had joined the arquebusiers as one of the Bargello's corporals; and what increased my rage was that he had used these boastful words: "If it had not been for me, who killed that brave young man, the least trifle of delay would have resulted in his putting us all to flight with great disaster."

When I saw that the fever caused by always seeing him about was depriving me of sleep and appetite, and was bringing me by degrees to sorry plight, I overcame my repugnance to so low and not quite praiseworthy an enterprise, and made my mind up one evening to rid myself of the torment. The fellow lived in a house near a place called Torre Sanguigua, next door to the lodging of one of the most fashionable courtesans in Rome, named Signora Antea. It had just struck twenty-four, and he was standing at the house-door, with his sword in hand, having risen from supper.

With great address I stole up to him, holding a large Pistojan dagger, and dealt him a back-handed stroke, with which I meant to cut his head clean off; but as he turned round very suddenly, the blow fell upon the point of his left shoulder and broke the bone. He sprang up, dropped his sword, half-stunned with the great pain, and took to flight. I followed after, and in four steps caught him up, when I lifted my dagger above his head, which he was holding very low, and hit him in the back exactly at the juncture of the nape-bone and the neck. The poniard entered this point so deep into the bone, that, though I used all my strength to pull it out, I was not able. For just at that moment four soldiers with drawn swords sprang out from Antea's lodging, and obliged me to set hand to my own sword to defend my life. Leaving the poniard then, I made off, and fearing I might be recognised, took refuge in the palace of Duke Alessandro, which was between Piazza Navona and the Rotunda. On my arrival, I asked to see the Duke; who told me that, if I was alone, I need only keep quiet and have no further anxiety, but to go on working at the jewel which the Pope had set his heart on, and stay eight days indoors. He gave this advice the more securely, because the soldiers had now arrived who interrupted the completion of my deed; they held the dagger in their hand, and were relating how the matter happened, and the great trouble they had to pull the weapon from the neck and head-bone of the man, whose name they did not know. Just then Giovan Bandini came up, and said to them. "That poniard is mine, and I lent it to Benvenuto, who was bent on revenging his brother." The soldiers were profuse in their expressions of regret at having interrupted me, although my vengeance had been amply satisfied.

More than eight days elapsed, and the Pope did not send for me according to his custom. Afterwards he summoned me through his chamberlain, the Bolognese nobleman I have already mentioned, who let me, in his own modest manner, understand that his Holiness knew all, but was very well inclined toward me, and that I had only to mind my work and keep quiet. When we reached the presence, the Pope cast so menacing a glance towards me, that the mere look of his eyes made me tremble. Afterwards, upon examining my work his countenance cleared, and he began to praise me beyond measure, saying that I had done a vast amount in a short time. Then, looking me straight in the face, he added: "Now that you are cured, Benvenuto, take heed how you live." I, who understood his meaning, promised that I would. Immediately upon this, I opened a very fine shop in the Banchi, opposite Raffaello, and there I finished the jewel after the lapse of a few months.

In this chapter we meet Cellini's familiar, we see that the papal court is terribly gossipy, and learn of a time where people are wandering around Rome with pockets full of jewels.

LII

THE POPE had sent me all those precious stones, except the diamond, which was pawned to certain Genoese bankers for some pressing need he had of money. The rest were in my custody, together with a model of the diamond. I had five excellent journeymen, and in addition to the great piece, I was engaged on

several jobs; so that my shop contained property of much value in jewels, gems, and gold and silver. I kept a shaggy dog, very big and handsome, which Duke Alessandro gave me; the beast was capital as a retriever, since he brought me every sort of birds and game I shot, but he also served most admirably for a watchdog. It happened, as was natural at the age of twenty-nine, that I had taken into my service a girl of great beauty and grace, whom I used as a model in my art, and who was also complaisant of her personal favours to me. Such being the case, I occupied an apartment far away from my workmen's rooms, as well as from the shop; and this communicated by a little dark passage with the maid's bedroom. I used frequently to pass the night with her; and though I sleep as lightly as ever yet did man upon this earth, yet, after indulgence in sexual pleasure, my slumber is sometimes very deep and heavy.

So it chanced one night: for I must say that a thief, under the pretext of being a goldsmith, had spied on me, and cast his eyes upon the precious stones, and made a plan to steal them. Well, then, this fellow broke into the shop, where he found a quantity of little things in gold and silver. He was engaged in bursting open certain boxes to get at the jewels he had noticed, when my dog jumped upon him, and put him to much trouble to defend himself with his sword. The dog, unable to grapple with an armed man, ran several times through the house, and rushed into the rooms of the journeymen, which had been left open because of the great heat. When he found they paid no heed to his loud barking, he dragged their bed-clothes off; and when they still heard nothing, he pulled first one and then another by the arm till he roused them, and, barking furiously, ran before to show them where he wanted them to go. At last it became clear that they refused to follow; for the traitors, cross at being disturbed, threw stones and sticks at him; and this they could well do, for I had ordered them to keep all night a lamp alight there; and in the end they shut their rooms tight; so the dog, abandoning all hope of aid from such rascals, set out alone again on his adventure. He ran down, and not finding the thief in the shop, flew after him. When he got at him, he tore the cape off his back. It would have gone hard with the fellow had he not called for help to certain tailors, praying them for God's sake to save him from a mad dog; and they, believing what he said, jumped out and drove the dog off with much trouble.

After sunrise my workmen went into the shop, and saw that it had been broken open and all the boxes smashed. They began to scream at the top of their voices: "Ah, woe is me! Ah, woe is me!" The clamour woke me, and I rushed out in a panic. Appearing thus before them, they cried out: "Alas to us! for we have been robbed by some one, who has broken and borne everything away!" These words wrought so forcibly upon my mind that I dared not go to my big chest and look if it still held the jewels of the Pope. So intense was the anxiety, that I seemed to lose my eyesight, and told them they themselves must unlock the chest, and see how many of the Pope's gems were missing. The fellow were all of them in their shirts; and when, on opening the chest, they saw the precious stones and my work with them, they took heart of joy and shouted: "There is no harm done; your piece and all the stones are here; but the thief has left us naked to the shirt, because last night, by reason of the burning heat, we took our clothes off in the shop and left them here." Recovering my senses, I thanked God, and said: "Go and get yourselves new suits of clothes; I will pay when I hear at leisure how the whole thing happened." What caused me the most pain, and made me lose my senses, and take fright-so contrary to my real nature-was the dread lest peradventure folk should fancy I had trumped a story of the robber up to steal the jewels. It had already been paid to Pope Clement by one of his most trusted servants, and by others, that is, by Francesco del Nero, Zana de' Biliotti his accountant, the Bishop of Vasona, and several such men: "Why, most blessed Father, do you confide gems of that vast value to a young fellow, who is all fire, more passionate for arms than for his art, and not yet thirty years of age?" The Pope asked in answer if any one of them knew that I had done aught to justify such suspicions. Whereto Francesco del Nero, his treasurer, replied: "No, most blessed Father, because he has not as yet had an opportunity. "Whereto the Pope rejoined: "I regard him as a thoroughly honest man; and if I saw with my own eyes some crime he had committed, I should not believe it." This was the man who caused me the greatest torment, and who suddenly came up before my mind.

After telling the young men to provide themselves with fresh clothes, I took my piece, together with the gems, setting them as well as I could in their proper places, and went off at once with them to the Pope. Francesco del Nero had already told him something of the trouble in my shop, and had put suspicions in his head. So then, taking the thing rather ill than otherwise, he shot a furious glance upon me, and cried haughtily: "What have you come to do here? What is up?" "Here are all your precious stones, and not one of them is missing." At this the Pope's face cleared, and he said: "So then, you're welcome." I showed him the piece, and while he was inspecting it, I related to him the whole story of the thief and of my agony, and what had been my greatest trouble in the matter. During this speech, he oftentimes turned round to look me sharply in the eyes; and Francesco del Nero being also in the presence, this seemed to make him half sorry that he had not guessed the truth. At last, breaking into laughter at the long tale I was telling, he sent me off with these words: "Go, and take heed to be an honest man, as indeed I know that you are."

## LIV

ON that very day, as I was passing through the Piazza Navona, and had my fine retriever with me, just when we came opposite the gate of the Bargello, my dog flew barking loudly inside the door upon a youth, who had been arrested at the suit of a man called Donnino (a goldsmith from Parma, and a former pupil of Caradosso), on the charge of having robbed him. The dog strove so

violently to tear the fellow to pieces, that the constables were moved to pity. It so happened that he was pleading his own cause with boldness, and Donnino had not evidence enough to support the accusation; and what was more, one of the corporals of the guard, a Genoese, was a friend of the young man's father. The upshot was that, what with the dog and with those other circumstances, they were on the point of releasing their prisoner. When I came up, the dog had lost all fear of sword or staves, and was flying once more at the young man; so they told me if I did not call the brute off they would kill him. I held him back as well as I was able; but just then the fellow, in the act of readjusting his cape, let fall some paper packets from the hood, which Donnino recognised as his property. I too recognised a little ring; whereupon I called out. "This is the thief who broke into my shop and robbed it; and therefore my dog knows him;" then I loosed the dog, who flew again upon the robber. On this the fellow craved for mercy, promising to give back whatever he possessed of mine. When I had secured the dog, he proceeded to restore the gold and silver and the rings which he had stolen from me, and twenty-five crowns in addition. Then he cried once more to me for pity. I told him to make his peace with God, for I should do him neither good nor evil. So I returned to my business; and a few days afterwards…the Genoese thief was hanged in the Campo di Fiore, while I remained in better repute as an honest man than I had enjoyed before.

LV

WHEN I had nearly finished my piece, there happened that terrible inundation which flooded the whole of Rome. I waited to see what would happen; the day was well-nigh spent, for the clocks struck twenty-two and the water went on rising formidably. Now the front of my house and shop faced the Banchi, but the back was several yards higher, because it turned toward Monte Giordano; accordingly, bethinking me first of my own safety and in the next place of my honour, I filled my pockets with the jewels, and gave the gold-piece into the custody of my workmen, and then descended barefoot from the back-windows, and waded as well as I could until I reached Monte Cavallo. There I sought out Messer Giovanni Gaddi, clerk of the Camera, and Bastiano Veneziano, the painter. To the former I confided the precious stones, to keep in safety: he had the same regard for me as though I had been his brother. A few days later, when the rage of the river was spent, I returned to my workshop, and finished the piece with such good fortune, through God's grace and my own great industry, that it was held to be the finest masterpiece which had been ever seen in Rome.

When then I took it to the Pope, he was insatiable in praising me, and said: "Were I but a wealthy emperor, I would give my Benvenuto as much land as his eyes could survey; yet being nowadays but needy bankrupt potentates, we will at any rate give him bread enough to satisfy his modest wishes." I let the Pope run on to the end of his rhodomontade, and then asked him for a mace-bearer's place which happened to be vacant. He replied that he would grant me something of far greater consequence. I begged his Holiness to bestow this little thing on me meanwhile by way of earnest. He began to laugh, and said he was willing, but that he did not wish me to serve, and that I must make some arrangement with the other mace-bearers to be exempted. He would allow them through me a certain favour, for which they had already petitioned, namely, the right of recovering their fees at law. This was accordingly done, and that mace-bearer's office brought me in little less than 200 crowns a year.

# Cellini shoots a man in the head by pure accident on his way to France

We return to the biography of goldsmith and adventurer Benevenuto Cellini, for him to, once again, randomly murder some guy and get away with it. Then again, knowing Cellini if he'd actually wanted to shoot the guy he would have told us that it was a great shot, using his rifle which is better than yours, using his secret formula for powder. He's that kind of guy.

He does say that he rapidly reloads his arquebus while still ahorse, which is a tricky manoeuvre given that cartridges haven't been invented yet. The usual thing people do in the Magonomia period is carry a brace of pistols so that they don't need to reload.

The people who have taken his saddle pad are using a partisan and a spontoon, which are both pole arms, each like a long spear or short pike.

Thanks to the Librivox recorders – Pamela and Chris – and their production teams.

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I bought a new pair of stirrups, although I still hoped to regain my good pad by persuasion; and since I was very well mounted, and well armed with shirt and sleeves of mail, and carried an excellent arquebuse upon my saddle-bow, I was not afraid of the brutality and violence which that mad beast was said to be possessed of. I had also accustomed my young men to carry shirts of mail, and had great confidence in the Roman, who, while we were in Rome together, had never left it off, so far as I could see; Ascanio too, although he was but a stripling, was in the habit of wearing one. Besides, as it was Good Friday, I imagined that the madnesses of madmen might be giving themselves a holiday. When we came to the Camollia gate, I at once recognised the postmaster by the indications given me; for he was blind of the left eye.

Riding up to him then, and leaving my young men and companions at a little distance, I courteously addressed him: “Master of the post, if I assure you that I did not override your horse, why are you unwilling to give me back my pad and stirrups?” The reply he made was precisely as mad and brutal as had been foretold me. This roused me to exclaim: “How then! are you not a Christian? or do you want upon Good Friday to force us both into a scandal?” He answered that Good Friday or the Devil’s Friday was all the same to him, and that if I did not take myself away, he would fell me to the ground with a spontoon which he had taken up—me and the arquebuse I had my hand on.

Upon hearing these truculent words, an old gentleman of Siena joined us; he was dressed like a citizen, and was returning from the religious functions proper to that day. It seems that he had gathered the sense of my arguments before he came up to where we stood; and this impelled him to rebuke the postmaster with warmth, taking my side, and reprimanding the man’s two sons for not doing their duty to passing strangers; so that their manners were an offence to God and a disgrace to the city of Siena. The two young fellows wagged their heads without saying a word, and withdrew inside the house. Their father, stung to fury by the scolding of that respectable gentleman, poured out a volley of abusive blasphemies, and levelled his spontoon, swearing he would murder me.

When I saw him determined to do some act of bestial violence, I pointed the muzzle of my arquebuse, with the object only of keeping him at a distance. Doubly enraged by this, he flung himself upon me.

Though I had prepared the arquebuse for my defence, I had not yet levelled it exactly at him; indeed it was pointed too high. It went off of itself; and the ball, striking the arch of the door and glancing backwards, wounded him in the throat, so that he fell dead to earth. Upon this the two young men came running out; one caught up a partisan from the rack which stood there, the other seized the spontoon of his father. Springing upon my followers, the one who had the spontoon smote Pagolo the Roman first above the left nipple. The other attacked a Milanese who was in our company, and had the ways and manners of a perfect fool. This man screamed out that he had nothing in the world to do with me, and parried the point of the partisan with a little stick he held; but this availed him naught: in spite of his words and fencing, he received a flesh wound in the mouth. Messer Cherubino wore the habit of a priest; for though he was a clockmaker by trade, he held benefices of some value from the Pope. Ascanio, who was well armed, stood his ground without trying to escape, as the Milanese had done; so these two came off unhurt.

I had set spurs to my horse, and while he was galloping, had charged and got my arquebuse in readiness again; but now I turned back, burning with fury, and meaning to play my part this time in earnest. I thought that my young men had been killed, and was resolved to die with them.

The horse had not gone many paces when I met them riding toward me, and asked if they were hurt. Ascanio answered that Pagolo was wounded to the death. Then I said: “O Pagolo, my son, did the spontoon then pierce through your armour?”

“No,” he replied, “for I put my shirt of mail in the valise this morning.”

“So then, I suppose, one wears chain-mail in Rome to swagger before ladies, but where there is danger, and one wants it, one keeps it locked up in a portmanteau? You deserve what you have got, and you are now the cause of sending me back to die here too.”

While I was uttering these words, I kept riding briskly onward; but both the young men implored me for the love of God to save myself and them, and not to rush on certain death. Just then I met Messer Cherubino and the wounded Milanese. The former cried out that no one was badly wounded; the blow given to Pagolo had only grazed the skin, but the old postmaster was stretched out dead; his sons with other folk were getting ready for attack, and we must almost certainly be cut to pieces: “Accordingly, Benvenuto, since fortune has saved us from this first tempest, do not tempt her again, for things may not go so favourably a second time.”

To this I replied: “If you are satisfied to have it thus, so also am I;” and turning to Pagolo and Ascanio, I said: “Strike spurs to your horses, and let us gallop to Staggia without stopping; there we shall be in safety.”

The wounded Milanese groaned out: “A pox upon our peccadilloes! the sole cause of my misfortune was that I sinned by taking a little broth this morning, having nothing else to break my fast with.” In spite of the great peril we were in, we could not help laughing a little at the donkey and his silly speeches. Then we set spurs to our horses, and left Messer Cherubino and the Milanese to follow at their leisure.

While we were making our escape, the sons of the dead man ran to the Duke of Melfi, and begged for some light horsemen to catch us up and take us prisoners. The Duke upon being informed that we were the Cardinal of Ferrara’s men, refused to give them troops or leave to follow.

We meanwhile arrived at Staggia, where we were in safety. There we sent for a doctor, the best who could be had in such a place; and on his examining Pagolo, we discovered that the wound was only skin-deep; so I felt sure that he would escape without mischief. Then we ordered dinner; and at this juncture there arrived Messer Cherubino and that Milanese simpleton, who kept always muttering: “A plague upon your quarrels,” and complaining that he was excommunicated because he had not been able to say a single Paternoster on that holy morning.

He was very ugly, and his mouth, which nature had made large, had been expanded at least three inches by his wound; so that what with his ludicrous Milanese jargon and his silly way of talking, he gave us so much matter for mirth, that, instead of bemoaning our ill-luck, we could not hold from laughing at every word he uttered. When the doctor wanted to sew up his wound, and had already made three stitches with his needle, the fellow told him to hold hard a while, since he did not want him out of malice to sew his whole mouth up. Then he took up a spoon, and said he wished to have his mouth left open enough to take that spoon in, in order that he might return alive to his own folk. These things he said with such odd waggings of the head, that we never stopped from laughing, and so pursued our journey mirthfully to Florence.

# Cellini – the necromancer, the mistress and the assassin.

A huge chunk from the Autobiography of Benevenuto Cellini in this episode. There's some period magic here which is what originally drew me to this author.

In this section I initially didn't include the bit at the end about the assassin, but I want to be able to call back to it when, later. In a few episodes' time, Cellini murders a Papal courtier, who hired the assassin, in the street. That's a turning point in his life.

Thanks to the Librivox team who recorded these chapters. The narrators are Morgan Sc orpion, Sue Anderson, and Sibella Denton.

LXIII

…At that time, as is the wont of young men, I had fallen in love with a Sicilian girl, who was exceedingly beautiful. On it becoming clear that she returned my affection, her mother perceived how the matter stood, and grew suspicious of what might happen. The truth is that I had arranged to elope with the girl for a year to Florence, unknown to her mother; but she, getting wind of this, left Rome secretly one night, and went off in the direction of Naples. She gave out that she was gone by Cività Vecchia, but she really went by Ostia. I followed them to Cività Vecchia, and did a multitude of mad things to discover her. It would be too long to narrate them all in detail; enough that I was on the point of losing my wits or dying. After two months she wrote to me that she was in Sicily, extremely unhappy. I meanwhile was indulging myself in all the pleasures man can think of, and had engaged in another love affair, merely to drown the memory of my real passion.

LXIV

IT happened through a variety of singular accidents that I became intimate with a Sicilian priest, who was a man of very elevated genius and well instructed in both Latin and Greek letters. In the course of conversation one day we were led to talk about the art of necromancy; apropos of which I said: "Throughout my whole life I have had the most intense desire to see or learn something of this art." Thereto the priest replied: "A stout soul and a steadfast must the man have who sets himself to such an enterprise." I answered that of strength and steadfastness of soul I should have enough and to spare, provided I found the opportunity. Then the priest said: "If you have the heart to dare it, I will amply satisfy your curiosity." Accordingly we agreed upon attempting the adventure.

The priest one evening made his preparations, and bade me find a comrade, or not more than two. I invited Vincenzio Romoli, a very dear friend of mine, and the priest took with him a native of Pistoja, who also cultivated the black art. We went together to the Coliseum; and there the priest, having arrayed himself in necromancer's robes, began to describe circles on the earth with the finest ceremonies that can be imagined. I must say that he had made us bring precious perfumes and fire, and also drugs of fetid odour. When the preliminaries were completed, he made the entrance into the circle; and taking us by the hand, introduced us one by one inside it. Then he assigned our several functions; to the necromancer, his comrade, he gave the pentacle to hold; the other two of us had to look after the fire and the perfumes; and then he began his incantations. This lasted more than an hour and a half; when several legions appeared, and the Coliseum was all full of devils. I was occupied with the precious perfumes, and when the priest perceived in what numbers they were present, he turned to me and said: "Benvenuto, ask them something." I called on them to reunite me with my Sicilian Angelica. That night we obtained no answer; but I enjoyed the greatest satisfaction of my curiosity in such matters. The necromancer said that we should have to go a second time, and that I should obtain the full accomplishment of my request; but he wished me to bring with me a little boy of pure virginity.

I chose one of my shop-lads, who was about twelve years old, and invited Vincenzio Romoli again; and we also took a certain Agnolino Gaddi, who was a very intimate friend of both. When we came once more to the place appointed, the necromancer made just the same preparations, attended by the same and even more impressive details. Then he introduced us into the circle, which he had reconstructed with art more admirable and yet more wondrous ceremonies. Afterwards he appointed my friend Vincenzio to the ordering of the perfumes and the fire, and with him Agnolino Gaddi. He next placed in my hand the pentacle, which he bid me turn toward the points he indicated, and under the pentacle I held the

little boy, my workman. Now the necromancer began to utter those awful invocations, calling by name on multitudes of demons who are captains of their legions, and these he summoned by the virtue and potency of God, the Uncreated, Living, and Eternal, in phrases of the Hebrew, and also of the Greek and Latin tongues; insomuch that in a short space of time the whole Coliseum was full of a hundredfold as many as had appeared upon the first occasion. Vincenzio Romoli, together with Agnolino, tended the fire and heaped on quantities of precious perfumes. At the advice of the necromancer, I again demanded to be reunited with Angelica.

The sorcerer turned to me and said: “Hear you what they have replied; that in the space of one month you will be where she is?” Then once more he prayed me to stand firm by him, because the legions were a thousandfold more than he had summoned, and were the most dangerous of all the denizens of hell; and now that they had settled what I asked, it behoved us to be civil to them and dismiss them gently.

On the other side, the boy, who was beneath the pentacle, shrieked out in terror that a million of the fiercest men were swarming round and threatening us. He said, moreover, that four huge giants had appeared, who were striving to force their way inside the circle. Meanwhile the necromancer, trembling with fear, kept doing his best with mild and soft persuasions to dismiss them. Vincenzio Romoli, who quaked like an aspen leaf, looked after the perfumes. Though I was quite as frightened as the rest of them, I tried to show it less, and inspired them all with marvellous courage; but the truth is that I had given myself up for dead when I saw the terror of the necromancer.

The boy had stuck his head between his knees, exclaiming: “This is how I will meet death, for we are certainly dead men.”

Again I said to him: “These creatures are all inferior to us, and what you see is only smoke and shadow; so then raise your eyes.”

When he had raised them he cried out: “The whole Coliseum is in flames, and the fire is advancing on us;” then covering his face with his hands, he groaned again that he was dead, and that he could not endure the sight longer.

The necromancer appealed for my support, entreating me to stand firm by him, and to have assafetida flung upon the coals; so I turned to Vincenzio Romoli, and told him to make the fumigation at once. While uttering these words I looked at Agnolino Gaddi, whose eyes were starting from their sockets in his terror, and who was more than half dead, and said to him: “Agnolo, in time and place like this we must not yield to fright, but do the utmost to bestir ourselves; therefore, up at once, and fling a handful of that assafetida upon the fire.” Agnolo, at the moment when he moved to do this, let fly such a volley from his breech, that it was far more effectual than the assafetida. The boy, roused by that great stench and noise, lifted his face little, and hearing me laugh, he plucked up courage, and said the devils were taking to flight tempestuously. So we abode thus until the matinbells began to sound. Then the boy told us again that but few remained, and those were at a distance. When the necromancer had concluded his ceremonies, he put off his wizard’s robe, and packed up a great bundle of books which he had brought with him; then, all together, we issued with him from the circle, huddling as close as we could to one another, especially the boy, who had got into the middle, and taken the necromancer by his gown and me by the cloak.

All the while that we were going toward our houses in the Banchi, he kept saying that two of the devils he had seen in the Coliseum were gamboling in front of us, skipping now along the roofs and now upon the ground. The necromancer assured me that, often as he had entered magic circles, he had never met with such a serious affair as this. He also tried to persuade me to assist him in consecrating a book, by means of which we should extract immeasurable wealth, since we could call up fiends to show us where treasures were, whereof the earth is full; and after this wise we should become the richest of mankind: love affairs like mine were nothing but vanities and follies without consequence.

I replied that if I were a Latin scholar I should be very willing to do what he suggested. He continued to persuade me by arguing that Latin scholarship was of no importance, and that, if he wanted, he could have found plenty of good Latinists; but that he had never met with a man of soul so firm as mine, and that I ought to follow his counsel. Engaged in this conversation, we reached our homes, and each one of us dreamed all that night of devils.

## LXV

As we were in the habit of meeting daily, the necromancer kept urging me to join in his adventure. Accordingly, I asked him how long it would take, and where we should have to go. To this he answered that we might get through with it in less than a month, and that the most suitable locality for the purpose was the hill country of Norcia; a master of his in the art had indeed consecrated such a book quite close to Rome, at a place called the Badia di Farfa; but he had met with some difficulties there, which would not occur in the mountains of Norcia; the peasants also of that district are people to be trusted, and have some practice in these matters, so that at a pinch they are able to render valuable assistance.

This priestly sorcerer moved me so by his persuasions that I was well disposed to comply with his request; but I

said I wanted first to finish the medals I was making for the Pope. I had confided what I was doing about them to him alone, begging him to keep my secret. At the same time I never stopped asking him if he believed that I should be reunited to my Sicilian Angelica at the time appointed; for the date was drawing near, and I thought it singular that I heard nothing about her. The necromancer told me that it was quite certain I should find myself where she was, since the devils never break their word when they promise, as they did on that occasion; but he bade me keep my eyes open, and be on the look out against some accident which might happen to me in that connection, and put restraint upon myself to endure somewhat against my inclination, for he could discern a great and imminent danger in it: well would it be for me if I went with him to consecrate the book, since this would avert the peril that menaced me, and would make us both most fortunate.

I was beginning to hanker after the adventure more than he did; but I said that a certain Maestro Giovanni of Castel Bolognese had just come to Rome, very ingenious in the art of making medals of the sort I made in steel, and that I thirsted for nothing more than to compete with him and take the world by storm with some great masterpiece, which I hoped would annihilate all those enemies of mine by the force of genius and not the sword. The sorcerer on his side went on urging: “Nay, prithee, Benvenuto, come with me and shun a great disaster which I see impending over you.” However, I had made my mind up, come what would, to finish my medal, and we were now approaching the end of the month. I was so absorbed and enamoured by my work that I thought no more about Angelica or anything of that kind, but gave my whole self up to it.

## LXVI

IT happened one day, close on the hours of vespers, that I had to go at an unusual time for me from my house to my workshop; for I ought to say that the latter was in the Banchi, while I lived behind the Banchi, and went rarely to the shop; all my business there I left in the hands of my partner, Felice. Having stayed a short while in the workshop, I remembered that I had to say something to Alessandro del Bene. So I arose, and when I reached the Banchi, I met a man called Ser Benedetto, who was a great friend of mine. He was a notary, born in Florence, son of a blind man who said prayers about the streets for alms, and a Sienese by race. This Ser Benedetto had been very many years at Naples; afterwards he had settled in Rome, where he transacted business for some Sienese merchants of the Chigi.

My partner had over and over again asked him for some moneys which were due for certain little rings confided to Ser Benedetto. That very day, meeting him in the Banchi, he demanded his money rather roughly, as his wont was. Benedetto was walking with his masters, and they, annoyed by the interruption, scolded him sharply, saying they would be served by somebody else, in order not to have to listen to such barking. Ser Benedetto did the best he could to excuse himself, swore that he had paid the goldsmith, and said he had no power to curb the rage of madmen. The Sienese took his words ill, and dismissed him on the spot. Leaving them, he ran like an arrow to my shop, probably to take revenge upon Felice. It chanced that just in the middle of the street we met. I, who had heard nothing of the matter, greeted him most kindly, according to my custom, to which courtesy he replied with insults. Then what the sorcerer had said flashed all at once upon my mind; and bridling myself as well as I was able, in the way he bade me, I answered: “Good brother Benedetto, don’t fly into a rage with me, for I have done you no harm, nor do I know anything about these affairs of yours. Please go and finish what you have to do with Felice. He is quite capable of giving you a proper answer; but inasmuch as I know nothing about it, you are wrong to abuse me in this way, especially as you are well aware that I am not the man to put up with insults.” He retorted that I knew everything, and that he was the man to make me bear a heavier load than that, and that Felice and I were two great rascals. By this time a crowd had gathered round to hear the quarrel. Provoked by his ugly words, I stooped and took up a lump of mud-for it had rained-and hurled it with a quick and unpremeditated movement at his face. He ducked his head, so that the mud hit him in the middle of the skull. There was a stone in it with several sharp angles, one of which striking him, he fell stunned like a dead man: whereupon all the bystanders, seeing the great quantity of blood, judged that he was really dead.

## LXVII

WHILE he was still lying on the ground, and people were preparing to carry him away, Pompeo the jeweller passed by. The Pope had sent for him to give orders about some jewels. Seeing the fellow in such a miserable plight, he asked who had struck him; on which they told him: “Benvenuto did it, but the stupid creature brought it down upon himself.” No sooner had Pompeo reached the Pope than he began to speak: “Most blessed Father, Benvenuto has this very moment murdered Tobbia; I saw it with my own eyes.” On this the Pope in a fury ordered the Governor, who was in the presence, to take and hang me at once in the place where the homicide had been committed, adding that he must do all he could to catch me, and not appear again before him until he had hanged me.

When I saw the unfortunate Benedetto stretched upon the ground, I thought at once of the peril I was in, considering the power of my enemies, and what might ensue from this disaster. Making off, I took refuge in the house of Messer Giovanni Gaddi, clerk of the Camera, with the intention of preparing as soon as possible to escape from Rome. He, however, advised me not to be in such a hurry, for it might turn out perhaps that the evil was not so great as I imagined; and calling Messer

Annibal Caro, who lived with him, bade him go for information.

While these arrangements were being made, A Roman gentleman appeared, who belonged to the household of Cardinal de' Medici, and had been sent by him. Taking Messer Giovanni and me apart, he told us that the Cardinal had reported to him what the Pope said, and that there was no way of helping me out of the scrape; it would be best for me to shun the first fury of the storm by flight, and not to risk myself in any house in Rome. Upon this gentleman's departure, Messer Giovanni looked me in the face as though he were about to cry, and said: "Ah me! Ah woe is me! There is nothing I can do to aid you!" I replied: "By God's means, I shall aid myself alone; only I request you to put one of your horses at my disposition." They had already saddled a black Turkish horse, the finest and the best in Rome. I mounted with an arquebuse upon the saddle-bow, wound up in readiness to fire, if need were. When I reached Ponte Sisto, I found the whole of the Bargello's guard there, both horse and foot. So, making a virtue of necessity, I put my horse boldly to a sharp trot, and with God's grace, being somehow unperceived by them, passed freely through. Then, with all the speed I could, I took the road to Palombara, a fief of my lord Giovanbatista Savello, whence I sent the horse back to Messer Giovanni, without, however, thinking it well to inform him where I was. Lord Giovanbatista, after very kindly entertaining me two days, advised me to remove and go toward Naples till the storm blew over. So, providing me with company, he set me on the way to Naples.

While travelling, I met a sculptor of my acquaintance, who was going to San Germano to finish the tomb of Piero de' Medici at Monte Cassino. His name was Solosmeo, and he gave me the news that on the very evening of the fray, Pope Clement sent one of his chamberlains to inquire how Tobbia was getting on. Finding him at work, unharmed, and without even knowing anything about the matter, the messenger went back and told the Pope, who turned round to Pompeo and said: "You are a good-for-nothing rascal; but I promise you well that you have stirred a snake up which will sting you, and serve you right!" Then he addressed himself to Cardinal de' Medici, and commissioned him to look after me, adding that he should be very sorry to let me slip through his fingers. And so Solosmeo and I went on our way singing toward Monte Cassino, intending to pursue our journey thence in company toward Naples.

## LXVIII

WHEN Solosmeo had inspected his affairs at Monte Cassino, we resumed our journey; and having come within a mile of Naples, we were met by an innkeeper, who invited us to his house, and said he had been at Florence many years with Carlo Ginori; adding, that if we put up at his inn, he would treat us most kindly, for the reason that we both were Florentines. We told him frequently that we did not want to go to him. However, he kept passing, sometimes in front and sometimes behind, perpetually repeating that he would have us stop at his hostelry. When this began to bore me, I asked if he could tell me anything about a certain Sicilian woman called Beatrice, who had a beautiful daughter named Angelica, and both were courtesans. Taking it into his head that I was jeering him, he cried out: "God send mischief to all courtesans and such as favour them!" Then he set spurs to his horse, and made off as though he was resolved to leave us. I felt some pleasure at having rid myself in so fair a manner of that ass of an innkeeper; and yet I was rather the loser than the gainer; for the great love I bore Angelica had come back to my mind, and while I was conversing, not without some lover's sighs, upon this subject with Solosmeo, we saw the man returning to us at a gallop. When he drew up, he said: "Two or perhaps three days ago a woman and a girl came back to a house in my neighbourhood; they had the names you mentioned, but whether they are Sicilians I cannot say." I answered: "Such power over me has that name of Angelica, that I am now determined to put up at your inn."

We rode on all together with mine host into the town of Naples, and descended at his house. Minutes seemed years to me till I had put my things in order, which I did in the twinkling of an eye; then I went to the house, which was not far from our inn, and found there my Angelica, who greeted me with infinite demonstrations of the most unbounded passion. I stayed with her from evenfall until the following morning, and enjoyed such pleasure as I never had before or since; but while drinking deep of this delight, it occurred to my mind how exactly on that day the month expired, which had been prophesied within the necromantic circle by the devils. So then let every man who enters into relation with those spirits weigh well the inestimable perils I have passed through!

## LXIX

I HAPPENED to have in my purse a diamond, which I showed about among the goldsmiths; and though I was but young, my reputation as an able artist was so well known even at Naples that they welcomed me most warmly. Among others, I made acquaintance with a most excellent companion, a jeweller, Messer Domenico Fontana by name. This worthy man left his shop for the three days that I spent in Naples, nor even quitted my company, but showed me many admirable monuments of antiquity in the city and its neigbourhood. Moreover, he took me to pay my respects to the Viceroy of Naples, who had let him know that he should like to see me. When I presented myself to his Excellency, he received me with much honour; [1] and while we were exchanging compliments, the diamond which I have mentioned caught his eye. He made me show it him, and prayed me, if I parted with it, to give him the refusal. Having taken back the stone, I offered it again to his Excellency, adding that the diamond and I were at his service. Then he said that the diamond pleased him well, but that he should be

much better pleased if I were to stay with him; he would make such terms with me as would cause me to feel satisfied. We spoke many words of courtesy on both sides; and then coming to the merits of the diamond, his Excellency bade me without hesitation name the price at which I valued it. Accordingly I said that it was worth exactly two hundred crowns. He rejoined that in his opinion I had not overvalued it; but that since I had set it, and he knew me for the first artist in the world, it would not make the same effect when mounted by another hand. To this I said that I had not set the stone, and that it was not well set; its brilliancy was due to its own excellence; and that if I were to mount it afresh, I could make it show far better than it did. Then I put my thumb-nail to the angels of its facets, took it from the ring, cleaned it up a little, and handed it to the Viceroy. Delighted and astonished, he wrote me out a cheque for the two hundred crowns I had demanded.

When I returned to my lodging, I found letters from the Cardinal de' Medici, in which he told me to come back post-haste to Rome, and to dismount without delay at the palace of his most reverend lordship. I read the letter to my Angelica, who begged me with tears of affection either to remain in Naples or to take her with me. I replied that if she was disposed to come with me, I would give up to her keeping the two hundred ducats I had received from the Viceroy. Her mother perceiving us in this close conversation, drew nigh and said: "Benvenuto, if you want to take my daughter to Rome, leave me a sum of fifteen ducats, to pay for my lying-in, and then I will travel after you." I told the old harridan that I would very gladly leave her thirty if she would give me my Angelica. We made the bargain, and Angelica entreated me to by her a gown of black velvet, because the stuff was cheap at Naples. I consented to everything, sent for the velvet, settled its price and paid for it; then the old woman, who thought me over head and ears in love, begged for a gown of fine cloth for herself, as well as other outlays for her sons, and a good bit more money than I had offered. I turned to her with a pleasant air and said: "My dear Beatrice, are you satisfied with what I offered?" She answered that she was not; thereupon I said that what was not enough for her would be quite enough for me; and having kissed Angelica, we parted, she with tears, and I with laughter, and off at once I set for Rome.

## LXX

I LEFT Naples by night with my money in my pocket, and this I did to prevent being set upon or murdered, as is the way there; but when I came to Selciata, I had to defend myself with great address and bodily prowess from several horsemen who came out to assassinate me. During the following days, after leaving Solosmeo at his work in Monte Cassino, I came one morning to breakfast at the inn of Adanagni; and when I was near the house, I shot some birds with my arquebuse. An iron spike, which was in the lock of my musket, tore my right hand. Though the wound was not of any consequence, it seemed to be so, because it bled abundantly. Going into the inn, I put my horse up, and ascended to a large gallery, where I found a party of Neapolitan gentlemen just upon the point of sitting down to table; they had with them a young woman of quality, the loveliest I ever saw. At the moment when I entered the room, I was followed by a very brave young serving-man of mine holding a big partisan in his hand. The sight of us, our arms, and the blood, inspired those poor gentlemen with such terror, particularly as the place was known to be a nest of murderers, that they rose from table and called on God in a panic to protect them. I began to laugh, and said that God had protected them already, for that I was a man to defend them against whoever tried to do them harm. Then I asked them for something to bind up my wounded hand; and the charming lady took out a handkerchief richly embroidered with gold, wishing to make a bandage with it. I refused; but she tore the piece in half, and in the gentlest manner wrapt my hand up with her fingers. The company thus having regained confidence, we dined together very gaily; and when the meal was over, we all mounted and went off together. The gentlemen, however, were not as yet quite at their ease; so they left me in their cunning to entertain the lady, while they kept at a short distance behind. I rode at her side upon a pretty little horse of mine, making signs to my servant that he should keep somewhat apart, which gave us the opportunity of discussing things that are not sold by the apothecary. In this way I journeyed to Rome with the greatest enjoyment I have ever had.

When I got to Rome, I dismounted at the palace of Cardinal de' Medici, and having obtained an audience of his most reverend lordship, paid my respects, and thanked him warmly for my recall. I then entreated him to secure me from imprisonment, and even from a fine if that were possible. The Cardinal was very glad to see me; told me to stand in no fear; then turned to one of his gentlemen, called Messer Pier Antonio Pecci of Siena, ordering him to tell the Bargello not to touch me. He then asked him how the man was going on whose head I had broken with the stone. Messer Pier Antonio replied that he was very ill, and that he would probably be even worse; for when he heard that I was coming back to Rome, he swore he would die to serve me an ill turn. When the Cardinal heard that, he burst into a fit of laughter, and cried: "The fellow could not have taken a better way than this to make us know that he was born a Sienese." After that he turned to me and said: "For our reputation and your own, refrain these four or five days from going about in the Banchi; after that go where you like, and let fools die at their own pleasure."

I went home and set myself to finishing the medal which I had begun, with the head of Pope Clement and a figure of Peace on the reverse. The figure was a slender woman, dressed in very thin drapery, gathered at the waist, with a little torch in her hand, which was burning a heap of arms bound together like a trophy. In the background I had shown part of a temple, where was

Discord chained with a load of fetters. Round about it ran a legend in these words: ‘Clauduntur belli portæ.’

During the time that I was finishing this medal, the man whom I had wounded recovered, and the Pope kept incessantly asking for me. I, however, avoided visiting Cardinal de’ Medici; for whenever I showed my face before him, his lordship gave me some commission of importance, which hindered me from working at my medal to the end. Consequently Messer Pier Carnesecchi, who was a great favourite of the Pope’s, undertook to keep me in sight, and let me adroitly understand how much the Pope desired my services. I told him that in a few days I would prove to his Holiness that his service had never been neglected by me.

## LXXI

NOT many days had passed before, my medal being finished, I stamped it in gold, silver, and copper. After I had shown it to Messer Pietro, he immediately introduced me to the Pope. It was on a day in April after dinner, and the weather very fine; the Pope was in the Belvedere. After entering the presence, I put my medals together with the dies of steel into his hand. He took them, and recognising at once their mastery of art, looked Messer Pietro in the face and said: “The ancients never had such medals made for them as these.”

While he and the others were inspecting them, taking up now the dies and now the medals in their hands, I began to speak as submissively as I was able: “If a greater power had not controlled the working of my inauspicious stars, and hindered that with which they violently menaced me, your Holiness, without your fault or mine, would have lost a faithful and loving servant. It must, most blessed Father, be allowed that in those cases where men are risking all upon one throw, it is not wrong to do as certain poor and simple men are wont to say, who tell us we must mark seven times and cut once. [1] Your Holiness will remember how the malicious and lying tongue of my bitter enemy so easily aroused your anger, that you ordered the Governor to have me taken on the spot and hanged; but I have no doubt that when you had become aware of the irreparable act by which you would have wronged yourself, in cutting off from you a servant such as even now your Holiness hath said he is, I am sure, I repeat, that, before God and the world, you would have felt no trifling twinges of remorse. Excellent and virtuous fathers, and masters of like quality, ought not to let their arm in wrath descend upon their sons and servants with such inconsiderate haste, seeing that subsequent repentance will avail them nothing. But now that God has overruled the malign influences of the stars and saved me for your Holiness, I humbly beg you another time not to let yourself so easily be stirred to rage against me.”

The Pope had stopped from looking at the medals and was now listening attentively to what I said. There were many noblemen of the greatest consequence present, which made him blush a little, as it were for shame; and not knowing how else to extricate himself from this entanglement, he said that he could not remember having given such an order. I changed the conversation in order to cover his embarrassment. His Holiness then began to speak again about the medals, and asked what method I had used to stamp them so marvelously, large as they were; for he had never met with ancient pieces of that size. We talked a little on this subject; but being not quite easy that I might not begin another lecture sharper than the last, he praised my medals, and said they gave him the greatest satisfaction, but that he should like another reverse made according to a fancy of his own, if it were possible to stamp them with two different patterns. I said that it was possible to do so. Then his Holiness commissioned me to design the history of Moses when he strikes the rock and water issues from it, with this motto: ‘Ut bibat populus.’ At last he added: “Go Benvenuto; you will not have finished it before I have provided for your fortune.” After I had taken leave, the Pope proclaimed before the whole company that he would give me enough to live on wealthily without the need of labouring for any one but him. So I devoted myself entirely to working out this reverse with the Moses on it.

## LXXII

IN the meantime the Pope was taken ill, and his physicians thought the case was dangerous. Accordingly my enemy began to be afraid of me, and engaged some Neapolitan soldiers to do to me what he was dreading I might do to him. I had therefore much trouble to defend my poor life. In course of time, however, I completed the reverse; and when I took it to the Pope, I found him in bed in a most deplorable condition. Nevertheless, he received me with the greatest kindness, and wished to inspect the medals and the dies. He sent for spectacles and lights, but was unable to see anything clearly. Then he began to fumble with his fingers at them, and having felt them a short while, he fetched a deep sigh, and said to his attendants that he was much concerned about me, but that if God gave him back his health he would make it all right.

Three days afterwards the Pope died, and I was left with all my labour lost; yet I plucked up courage, and told myself that these medals had won me so much celebrity, that any Pope who was elected would give me work to do, and peradventure bring me better fortune. Thus I encouraged and put heart into myself, and buried in oblivion all the injuries which Pompeo had done me. Then putting on my arms and girding my sword, I went to San Piero, and kissed the feet of the dead Pope, not without shedding tears. Afterwards I returned to the Banchi to look on at the great commotion which always happens on such occasions.

While I was sitting in the street with several of my friends, Pompeo went by, attended by ten men very well armed; and when he came just opposite, he stopped, as though about to pick a quarrel with myself. My companions, brave and adventurous young men, made signs to me to draw my sword; but it flashed through my mind that if I drew, some terrible mischief might result for persons who were wholly innocent. Therefore I considered that it would be better if I put my life to risk alone. When Pompeo had stood there time enough to say two Ave Marias, he laughed derisively in my direction; and going off, his fellows also laughed and wagged their heads, with many other insolent gestures. My companions wanted to begin the fray at once; but I told them hotly that I was quite able to conduct my quarrels to an end by myself, and that I had no need of stouter fighters than I was; so that each of them might mind his business. My friends were angry and went off muttering. Now there was among them my dearest comrade, named Albertaccio del Bene, own brother to Alessandro and Albizzo, who is now a very rich man in Lyons. He was the most redoubtable young man I ever knew, and the most high-spirited, and loved me like himself; and insomuch as he was well aware that my forbearance had not been inspired by want of courage, but by the most daring bravery, for he knew me down to the bottom of my nature, he took my words up and begged me to favour him so far as to associate him with myself in all I meant to do. I replied: “Dear Albertaccio, dearest to me above all men that live, the time will very likely come when you shall give me aid; but in this case, if you love me, do not attend to me, but look to your own business, and go at once like our other friends, for now there is no time to lose.” These words were spoken in one breath.

LXXIII

IN the meanwhile my enemies had proceeded slowly toward Chiavica, as the place was called, and had arrived at the crossing of several roads, going in different directions; but the street in which Pompeo’s house stood was the one which leads straight to the Campo di Fiore. Some business or other made him enter the apothecary’s shop which stood at the corner of Chiavica, and there he stayed a while transacting it. I had just been told that he had boasted of the insult which he fancied he had put upon me; but be that as it may, it was to his misfortune; for precisely when I came up to the corner, he was leaving the shop and his bravi had opened their ranks and received him in their midst. I drew a little dagger with a sharpened edge, and breaking the line of his defenders, laid my hands upon his breast so quickly and coolly, that none of them were able to prevent me. Then I aimed to strike him in the face; but fright made him turn his head round; and I stabbed him just beneath the ear. I only gave two blows, for he fell stone dead at the second. I had not meant to kill him; but as the saying goes, knocks are not dealt by measure. With my left hand I plucked back the dagger, and with my right hand drew my sword to defend my life. However, all those bravi ran up to the corpse and took no action against me; so I went back alone through Strada Giulia, considering how best to put myself in safety.

I had walked about three hundred paces, when Piloto the goldsmith, my very good friend, came up and said: “Brother, now that the mischief’s done, we must see to saving you.” I replied: “Let us go to Albertaccio del Bene’s house; it is only a few minutes since I told him I should soon have need of him.” When we arrived there, Albertaccio and I embraced with measureless affection; and soon the whole flower of the young men of the Banchi, of all nations except the Milanese, came crowding in; and each and all made proffer of their own life to save mine. Messer Luigi Rucellai also sent with marvellous promptitude and courtesy to put his services at my disposal, as did many other great folk of his station; for they all agreed in blessing my hands, [1] judging that Pompeo had done me too great and unforgivable an injury, and marvelling that I had put up with him so long.

LXXIV

CARDINAL CORNARO, on hearing of the affair, despatched thirty soldiers, with as many partisans, pikes, and arquebuses, to bring me with all due respect to his quarters. [1] This he did unasked; whereupon I accepted the invitation, and went off with them, while more than as many of the young men bore me company. Meanwhile, Messer Traiano, Pompeo’s relative and first chamberlain to the Pope, sent a Milanese of high rank to Cardinal de’ Medici, giving him news of the great crime I had committed, and calling on his most reverend lordship to chastise me. The Cardinal retorted on the spot: “His crime would indeed have been great if he had not committed this lesser one; thank Messer Traiano from me for giving me this information of a fact of which I had not heard before.” Then he turned and in presence of the nobleman said to the Bishop of Frulli, [2] his gentleman and intimate acquaintance: “Search diligently after my friend Benvenuto; I want to help and defend him; and whoso acts against thyself acts against myself.” The Milanese nobleman went back, much disconcerted, while the Bishop of Frulli come to visit me at Cardinal Cornaro’s palace. Presenting himself to the Cardinal, he related how Cardinal de’ Medici had sent for Benvenuto, and wanted to be his protector. Now Cardinal Cornaro who had the touchy temper of a bear, flew into a rage, and told the Bishop he was quite as well able to defend me as Cardinal de’ Medici. The Bishop, in reply, entreated to be allowed to speak with me on some matters of his patron which had nothing to do with the affair. Cornaro bade him for that day make as though he had already talked with me.

Cardinal de’ Medici was very angry. However, I went the following night, without Cornaro’s knowledge, and under good escort, to pay him my respects. Then I begged him to grant me the favour of leaving me where I was, and told him of the great courtesy which Cornaro had shown

me; adding that if his most reverend lordship suffered me to stay, I should gain one friend the more in my hour of need; otherwise his lordship might dispose of me exactly as he thought best. He told me to do as I liked; so I returned to Cornaro's palace, and a few days afterwards the Cardinal Farnese was elected Pope.

After he had put affairs of greater consequence in order, the new Pope sent for me, saying that he did not wish any one else to strike his coins. To these words of his Holiness a gentleman very privately acquainted with him, named Messer Latino Juvinale, made answer that I was in hiding for a murder committed on the person of one Pompeo of Milan, and set forth what could be argued for my justification in the most favourable terms. [4] The Pope replied: "I knew nothing of Pompeo's death, but plenty of Benvenuto's provocation; so let a safe-conduct be at once made out for him, in order that he may be placed in perfect security." A great friend of Pompeo's, who was also intimate with the Pope, happened to be there; he was a Milanese, called Messer Ambrogio. This man said: "In the first days of your papacy it were not well to grant-pardons of this kind." The Pope turned to him and answered: "You know less about such matters than I do. Know then that men like Benvenuto, unique in their profession, stand above the law; and how far more he, then, who received the provocation I have heard of?" When my safe conduct had been drawn out, I began at once to serve him, and was treated with the utmost favour.

LXXV

MESSER LATINO JUVINALE came to call on me, and gave me orders to strike the coins of the Pope. This roused up all my enemies, who began to look about how they should hinder me; but the Pope, perceiving their drift, scolded them, and insisted that I should go on working. I took the dies in hand, designing a S. Paul, surrounded with this inscription: 'Vas electionis.' This piece of money gave far more satisfaction than the models of my competitors; so that the Pope forbade any one else to speak to him of coins, since he wished me only to have to do with them. This encouraged me to apply myself with untroubled spirit to the task; and Messer Latino Juvinale, who had received such orders from the Pope, used to introduce me to his Holiness. I had it much at heart to recover the post of stamper to the Mint; but on this point the Pope took advice, and then told me I must first obtain pardon for the homicide, and this I should get at the holy Maries' day in August through the Caporioni of Rome. I may say that it is usual every year on this solemn festival to grant the freedom of twelve outlaws to these officers. Meanwhile he promised to give me another safe-conduct, which should keep me in security until that time.

When my enemies perceived that they were quite unable to devise the means of keeping me out of the Mint, they resorted to another expedient. The deceased Pompeo had left three thousand ducats as dowry to an illegitimate daughter of his; and they contrived that a certain favourite of Signor Pier Luigi, the Pope's son, should ask her hand in marriage through the medium of his master. Accordingly the match came off; but this fellow was an insignificant country lad, who had been brought up by his lordship; and, as folk said, he got but little of the money, since his lordship laid his hands on it and had the mind to use it. Now the husband of the girl, to please his wife, begged the prince to have me taken up; and he promised to do so when the first flush of my favour with the Pope had passed away. Things stood so about two months, the servant always suing for his wife's dower, the master putting him off with pretexts, but assuring the woman that he would certainly revenge her father's murder. I obtained an inkling of these designs; yet I did not omit to present myself pretty frequently to his lordship, who made show of treating me with great distinction. He had, however, decided to do one or other of two things-either to have me assassinated, or to have me taken up by the Bargello. Accordingly he commissioned a certain little devil of a Corsican soldier in his service to do the trick as cleverly as he could; and my other enemies, with Messer Traiano at the head of them, promised the fellow a reward of one hundred crowns. He assured them that the job would be as easy as sucking a fresh egg. Seeing into their plot, I went about with my eyes open and with good attendance, wearing an under-coat and armlets of mail, for which I had obtained permission.

The Corsican, influenced by avarice, hoped to gain the whole sum of money without risk, and imagined himself capable of carrying the matter through alone. Consequently, one day after dinner, he had me sent for in the name of Signor Pier Luigi. I went off at once, because his lordship had spoken of wanting to order several big silver vases. Leaving my home in a hurry, armed, however, as usual, I walked rapidly through Strada Giulia toward the Palazzo Farnese, not expecting to meet anybody at that hour of day. I had reached the end of the street and was making toward the palace, when, my habit being always to turn the corners wide, I observed the Corsican get up and take his station in the middle of the road. Being prepared, I was not in the least disconcerted; but kept upon my guard, and slackening pace a little, drew nearer toward the wall, in order to give the fellow a wide berth. He on his side came closer to the wall, and when we were now within a short distance of each other, I perceived by his gestures that he had it in his mind to do me mischief, and seeing me alone thus, thought he should succeed. Accordingly, I began to speak and said: "Brave soldier, if it had been night, you might have said you had mistaken me, but since it is full day, you know well enough who I am. I never had anything to do with you, and never injured you, but should be well disposed to do you service." He replied in a high-spirited way, without, however, making room for me to pass, that he did not know what I was saying. Then I answered. "I know very well indeed what you want and what you are saying; but the job which you have taken in hand is more

dangerous and difficult than you imagine, and may peradventure turn out the wrong way for you. Remember that you have to do with a man who would defend himself against a hundred; and the adventure you are on is not esteemed by men of courage like yourself." Meanwhile I also was looking black as thunder, and each of us had changed colour. Folk too gathered round us, for it had become clear that our words meant swords and daggers. He then, not having the spirit to lay hands on me, cried out: "We shall meet another time." I answered: "I am always glad to meet honest men and those who show themselves as such."

When we parted, I went to his lordship's palace, and found he had not sent for me. When I returned to my shop, the Corsican informed me, through an intimate friend of his and mine, that I need not be on my guard against him, since he wished to be my good brother; but that I ought to be much upon my guard against others, seeing I was in the greatest peril, for folk of much consequence had sworn to have my life. I sent to thank him, and kept the best look-out I could. Not many days after, a friend of mine informed me that Signor Pier Luigi had given strict orders that I should be taken that very evening. They told me this at twenty; whereupon I spoke with some of my friends, who advised me to be off at once. The order had been given for one hour after sunset; accordingly at twenty-three I left in the post for Florence. It seems that when the Corsican showed that he had not pluck enough to do the business as he promised, Signor Pier Luigi on his own authority gave orders to have me taken, merely to stop the mouth of Pompeo's daughter, who was always clamouring to know where her dower had gone to. When he was unable to gratify her in this matter of revenge on either of the two plans he had formed, he bethought him of another, which shall be related in its proper place.

# Cellini meets the Angel of Death

A couple of quick comments, beyond the usual reminder to look at how many times Cellini tells you that he is better than other people, including you, We have some characters who, for context, need a little bit more description. The angel of death he meets is not the Jewish angel of death covered in Kabbalah or the Christian angel of death from The Church. It seems to be Charon, which shows that Cellini has been reading his Dante. From an Ars Magica perspective he may be an initiate of the Vigilian mysteries: that is he expects to go to Dante's inferno and be carried there by the guy who rows people across the river Styx. This is not, of course, a heterodox religious position in Mythic Europe.

Some other people: there's a character called Giorgio later in the story. Cellini accuses him of a crime and then there is this and back and forth. This Giorgio is Vasari, who later wrote "The Lives of the Artists": a key resource of biography for Renaissance artists. I have a copy of it on my shelf. I used it when I was first looking to write up Sanctuary of Ice. I believe it may be from where I stole the idea that House Jerbiton believes that "beauty is all that pleases": anyway he and Cellini cordially hated each other. Actually given it was Cellini, he probably didn't cordially hate him – he probably wanted to murder him but couldn't see his way clear to doing it. He beats up people on a pretty regular basis in these stories. The last person mentioned is Felice who is a servant or journeyman and later partner. He's not only Cellini's partner in a financial sense and in a trade sense, they are sexual partners as well. This comes out later during a court proceeding where he's charged for what was then considered immoral behaviour

Cellini is, in his own story so far as we can tell, polyamorous and bisexual. This doesn't seem to cause him any real difficulty, with the exception of a couple of ladies who sue him for something that's the equivalent of breach of promise. They also, likely truthfully, charged him with using them in the Italian manner, which he says he never did at all, and how dare anyone suggest it, and he would gladly fight people who suggested such a thing.

And now on to Cellini's meeting with the Angel of Death. The Librivox recording i'm using here is from quite early in the Librivox Project. I'd like to thank the two recorders Sibella Denton and PPRay. One recording is lower quality, just technically, than some of the others that I've used from that site. I did want to warn you in case you thought that something had changed in your headphones or speakers there's a lot more background crackle

LXXXI

…That very day, which was a Thursday, I received from Rome a full safe-conduct from the Pope, with advice to go there at once and get the pardon of Our Lady's feast in mid-August, in order that I might clear myself from the penalties attaching to my homicide…

ON the journey to Rome I carried with me that handsome arquebuse which the Duke gave me; and very much to my own pleasure, I used it several times by the way, performing incredible feats by means of it. The little house I had in Strada Giulia was not ready; so I dismounted at the house of Messer Giovanni Gaddi, clerk of the Camera, to whose keeping I had committed, on leaving Rome, many of my arms and other things I cared for. So I did not choose to alight at my shop, but sent for Felice, my partner, and got him to put my little dwelling forthwith into excellent order. The day following, I went to sleep there, after well providing myself with clothes and all things requisite, since I intended to go and thank the Pope next morning.

I had two young serving-lads, and beneath my lodgings lived a laundress who cooked extremely nicely for me.

That evening I entertained several friends at supper, and having passed the time with great enjoyment, betook myself to bed. The night had hardly ended, indeed it was more than an hour before daybreak, when I heard a furious knocking at the house-door, stroke succeeding stroke without a moment's pause. Accordingly I called my elder servant, Cencio [1] (he was the man I took into the necromantic circle), and bade him to go and see who the madman was that knocked so brutally at that hour of the night. While Cencio was on this errand, I lighted another lamp, for I always keep one by me at night; then I made haste to pass an excellent coat of mail over my shirt, and above that some clothes which I caught up at random. Cencio returned, exclaiming: "Heavens, master! it is the Bargello and all his guard; and he says that if you do not open at once, he will knock the door down. They have torches, and a thousand things besides with them!" I answered: "Tell them that I am huddling my clothes on, and will come out to them in my shirt." Supposing it was a trap laid to murder me, as had before been done by Signor Pier Luigi, I seized an excellent dagger with my right hand, and with the left I took the safe-conduct; then I ran to the back-window, which looked out on gardens, and there I saw more than thirty constables; wherefore I knew that I could not escape upon that side. I made the two lads go in front, and told them to open the door exactly when I gave the word to do so. Then taking up an attitude of defence, with the dagger in my right hand and the safe-conduct in my left, I cried to the lads: "Have no fear, but open!" The Bargello, Vittorio, and the officers sprang inside at once, thinking they could easily lay hands upon me; but when they saw me prepared in that way to receive them, they fell back, exclaiming: "We have a serious job on hand here!" Then I threw the safe-conduct to them, and said: "Read that! and since you cannot seize me, I do not mean that you shall touch me." The Bargello upon this ordered some of his men to arrest me, saying he would look to the safe-conduct later. Thereat I presented my arms boldly, calling aloud: "Let God defend the right! Either I shall escape your hands alive, or be taken a dead corpse!" The room was crammed with men; they made as though they would resort to violence; I stood upon my guard against them; so that the Bargello saw he would not be able to have me except in the way I said. Accordingly he called his clerk, and while the safe-conduct as being read, he showed by signs two or three times that he meant to have me secured by his officers; but this had no effect of shaking my determination. At last they gave up the attempt, threw my safe-conduct on the ground, and went away without their prize.

## LXXXIII

WHEN I returned to bed, I felt so agitated that I could not get to sleep again. My mind was made up to let blood as soon as day broke. However, I asked advice of Messer Gaddi, and he referred to a wretched doctor-fellow he employed, who asked me if I had been frightened. Now, just consider what a judicious doctor this was, after I had narrated an occurrence of that gravity, to ask me such a question! He was an empty fribbler, who kept perpetually laughing about nothing at all. Simpering and sniggering, then, he bade me drink a good cup of Greek wine, keep my spirits up, and not be frightened. Messer Giovanni, however, said: "Master, a man of bronze or marble might be frightened in such circumstances. How much more one of flesh and blood!" The quack responded: "Monsignor, we are not all made after the same pattern; this fellow is no man of bronze or marble, but of pure iron." Then he gave one of his meaningless laughs, and putting his fingers on my wrist, said: "Feel here; this is not a man's pulse, but a lion's or a dragon's." At this, I, whose blood was thumping in my veins, probably far beyond anything which that fool of a doctor had learned from his Hippocrates or Galen, knew at once how serious was my situation; yet wishing not to add to my uneasiness and to the harm I had already taken, I made show of being in good spirits. While this was happening, Messer Giovanni had ordered dinner, and we all of us sat down to eat in company. I remembered that Messer Lodovico da Fano, Messer Antonio Allegretti, Messer Giovanni Greco, all of them men of the finest scholarship, and Messer Annibal Caro, who was then quite young, were present. At table the conversation turned entirely upon my act of daring. They insisted on hearing the whole story over and over again from my apprentice Cencio, who was a youth of superlative talent, bravery, and extreme personal beauty. Each time that he described my truculent behaviour, throwing himself into the attitudes I had assumed, and repeating the words which I had used, he called up some fresh detail to my memory. They kept asking him if he had been afraid; to which he answered that they ought to ask me if I had been afraid, because he felt precisely the same as I had.

All this chattering grew irksome to me; and since I still felt strongly agitated, I rose at last from table, saying that I wanted to go and get new clothes of blue silk and stuff for him and me; adding that I meant to walk in procession after four days at the feast of Our Lady, and meant Cencio to carry a white lighted torch on the occasion. Accordingly I took my leave, and had the blue cloth cut, together with a handsome jacket of blue sarcenet and a little doublet of the same; and I had a similar jacket and waistcoat made for Cencio.

When these things had been cut out, I went to see the Pope, who told me to speak with Messer Ambruogio; for he had given orders that I should execute a large piece of golden plate. So I went to find Messer Ambruogio, who had heard the whole of the affair of the Bargello, and had been in concert with my enemies to bring me back to Rome, and had scolded the Bargello for not laying hands on me. The man excused himself by saying that he could not do so in the face of the safe-conduct which I held. Messer Ambruogio now began to talk about the Pope's commission, and bade me make drawings for it, saying that the business should be put at once in train. Meanwhile the feast of Our Lady came round. Now it is

the custom for those who get a pardon upon this occasion to give themselves up to prison; in order to avoid doing which I returned to the Pope, and told his Holiness that I was very unwilling to go to prison, and that I begged him to grant me the favour of a dispensation. The Pope answered that such was the custom, and that I must follow it. Thereupon I fell again upon my knees, and thanked him for the safe-conduct he had given me, saying at the same time that I should go back with it to serve my Duke in Florence, who was waiting for me so impatiently. On hearing this, the Pope turned to one of his confidential servants and said: “Let Benvenuto get his grace without the prison, and see that his ‘moto proprio’ is made out in due form.” As soon as the document had been drawn up, his Holiness signed it; it was then registered at the Capitol; afterwards, upon the day appointed, I walked in procession very honourably between two gentlemen, and so got clear at last.

## LXXXIV

FOUR days had passed when I was attacked with violent fever attended by extreme cold; and taking to my bed, I made my mind up that I was sure to die. I had the first doctors of Rome called in, among whom was Francesco da Norcia, a physician of great age, and of the best repute in Rome. I told them what I believed to be the cause of my illness, and said that I had wished to let blood, but that I had been advised against it; and if it was not too late, I begged them to bleed me now. Maestro Francesco answered that it would not be well for me to let blood then, but that if I had done so before, I should have escaped without mischief; at present they would have to treat the case with other remedies. So they began to doctor me as energetically as they were able, while I grew daily worse and worse so rapidly, that after eight days the physicians despaired of my life, and said that I might be indulged in any whim I had to make me comfortable. Maestro Francesco added: “As long as there is breath in him, call me at all hours; for no one can divine what Nature is able to work in a young man of this kind; moreover, if he should lose consciousness, administer these five remedies one after the other, and send for me, for I will come at any hour of the night; I would rather save him than any of the cardinals in Rome.”

Every day Messer Giovanni Gaddi came to see me two or three times, and each time he took up one or other of my handsome fowling-pieces, coats of mail, or swords, using words like these: “That is a handsome thing, that other is still handsomer;” and likewise with my models and other trifles, so that at last he drove me wild with annoyance. In his company came a certain Matio Franzesi and this man also appeared to be waiting impatiently for my death, not indeed because he would inherit anything from me, but because he wished for what his master seemed to have so much at heart.

Felice, my partner, was always at my side, rendering the greatest services which it is possible for one man to give another. Nature in me was utterly debilitated and undone; I had not strength enough to fetch my breath back if it left me; and yet my brain remained as clear and strong as it had been before my illness. Nevertheless, although I kept my consciousness, a terrible old man used to come to my bedside, and make as though he would drag me by force into a huge boat he had with him. This made me call out to my Felice to draw near and chase that malignant old man away. Felice, who loved me most affectionately, ran weeping and crying: “Away with you, old traitor; you are robbing me of all the good I have in this world.” Messer Giovanni Gaddi, who was present, then began to say: “The poor fellow is delirious, and has only a few hours to live.” His fellow, Mattio Franzesi, remarked: “He has read Dante, and in the prostration of his sickness this apparition has appeared to him” then he added laughingly: “Away with you, old rascal, and don’t bother our friend Benvenuto.” When I saw that they were making fun of me, I turned to Messer Gaddi and said: “My dear master, know that I am not raving, and that it is true that this old man is really giving me annoyance; but the best that you can do for me would be to drive that miserable Mattio from my side, who is laughing at my affliction, afterwards if your lordship deigns to visit me again, let me beg you to come with Messer Antonio Allegretti, or with Messer Annibal Caro, or with some other of your accomplished friends, who are persons of quite different intelligence and discretion from that beast.” Thereupon Messer Giovanni told Mattio in jest to take himself out of his sight for ever; but because Mattio went on laughing, the joke turned to earnest, for Messer Giovanni would not look upon him again, but sent for Messer Antonio Allegretti, Messer Ludovico, and Messer Annibal Caro. On the arrival of these worthy men, I was greatly comforted, and talked reasonably with them awhile, not however without frequently urging Felice to drive the old man away. Messer Ludovico asked me what it was I seemed to see, and how the man was shaped. While I portrayed him accurately in words, the old man took me by the arm and dragged me violently towards him. This made me cry out for aid, because he was going to fling me under hatches in his hideous boat. On saying that last word, I fell into a terrible swoon, and seemed to be sinking down into the boat. They say that during that fainting-fit I flung myself about and cast bad words at Messer Giovanni Gaddi, to wit, that he came to rob me, and not from any motive of charity, and other insults of the kind, which caused him to be much ashamed. Later on, they say I lay still like one dead; and after waiting by me more than an hour, thinking I was growing cold, they left me for dead. When they returned home, Mattio Franzesi was informed, who wrote to Florence to Messer Benedetto Varchi, my very dear friend, that they had seen me die at such and such an hour of the night. When he heard the news, that most accomplished man and my dear friend composed an admirable sonnet upon my supposed but not real death, which shall be reported in its proper place.

More than three long hours passed, and yet I did not regain consciousness. Felice having used all the remedies prescribed by Maestro Francesco, and seeing that I did not come to, ran post-haste to the physician's door, and knocked so loudly that he woke him up, and made him rise, and begged him with tears to come to the house, for he thought that I was dead. Whereto Maestro Francesco, who was a very choleric man, replied: "My son, of what use do you think I should be if I came? If he is dead, I am more sorry than you are. Do you imagine that if I were to come with my medicine I could blow breath up through his guts and bring him back to life for you?" But when he saw that the poor young fellow was going away weeping, he called him back and gave him an oil with which to anoint my pulses, and my heart, telling him to pinch my little fingers and toes very tightly, and to send at once to call him if I should revive. Felice took his way, and did as Maestro Francesco had ordered. It was almost bright day when, thinking they would have to abandon hope, they gave orders to have my shroud made and to wash me. Suddenly I regained consciousness, and called out to Felice to drive away the old man on the moment, who kept tormenting me. He wanted to send for Maestro Francesco, but I told him not to do so, but to come close up to me, because that old man was afraid of him and went away at once. So Felice drew near to the bed; I touched him, and it seemed to me that the infuriated old man withdrew; so I prayed him not to leave me for a second.

When Maestro Francesco appeared, he said it was his dearest wish to save my life, and that he had never in all his days seen greater force in a young man than I had. Then he sat down to write, and prescribed for me perfumes, lotions, unctions, plasters, and a heap of other precious things. Meanwhile I came to life again by the means of more than twenty leeches applied to my buttocks, but with my body bore through, bound, and ground to powder. Many of my friends crowded in to behold the miracle of the resuscitated dead man, and among them people of the first importance.

In their presence I declared that the small amount of gold and money I possessed, perhaps some eight hundred crowns, what with gold, silver, jewels, and cash, should be given by my will to my poor sister in Florence, called Mona Liperata; all the remainder of my property, armour and everything besides, I left to my dearest Felice, together with fifty golden ducats, in order that he might buy mourning. At those words Felice flung his arms around my neck, protesting that he wanted nothing but to have me as he wished alive with him. Then I said: "If you want me alive, touch me as you did before, and threaten the old man, for he is afraid of you." At these words some of the folk were terrified, knowing that I was not raving, but talking to the purpose and with all my wits. Thus my wretched malady went dragging on, and I got but little better. Maestro Francesco, that most excellent man, came four or five times a day; Messer Giovanni Gaddi, who felt ashamed, did not visit me again. My brother-in-law, the husband of my sister, arrived; he came from Florence for the inheritance; but as he was a very worthy man, he rejoiced exceedingly to have found me alive. The sight of him did me a world of good, and he began to caress me at once, saying he had only come to take care of me in person; and this he did for several days. Afterwards I sent him away, having almost certain hope of my recovery…

## LXXXV

MY sickness had been of such a very serious nature that it seemed impossible for me to fling it off. That worthy man Maestro Francesco da Norcia redoubled his efforts, and brought me every day fresh remedies, trying to restore strength to my miserable unstrung frame. Yet all these endeavours were apparently insufficient to overcome the obstinacy of my malady, so that the physicians were in despair and at their wits' ends what to do. I was tormented by thirst, but had abstained from drinking for many days according to the doctors' orders. Felice, who thought he had done wonders in restoring me, never left my side. That old man ceased to give so much annoyance, yet sometimes he appeared to me in dreams.

One day Felice had gone out of doors, leaving me under the care of a young apprentice and a servant-maid called Beatrice. I asked the apprentice what had become of my lad Cencio, and what was the reason why I had never seen him in attendance on me. The boy replied that Cencio had been far more ill than I was, and that he was even at death's door. Felice had given them orders not to speak to me of this. On hearing the news, I was exceedingly distressed; then I called the maid Beatrice, a Pistojan girl, and asked her to bring me a great crystal water-cooler which stood near, full of clear and fresh water. She ran at once, and brought it to me full; I told her to put it to my lips, adding that if she let me take a draught according to my heart's content, I would give her a new gown. This maid had stolen from me certain little things of some importance, and in her fear of being detected, she would have been very glad if I had died. Accordingly she allowed me twice to take as much as I could of the water, so that in good earnest I swallowed more than a flask full. I then covered myself, and began to sweat, and fell into a deep sleep. After I had slept about an hour, Felice came home and asked the boy how I was getting on. He answered: "I do not know. Beatrice brought him that cooler full of water, and he has drunk almost the whole of it. I don't know now whether he is alive or dead." They say that my poor friend was on the point of falling to the ground, so grieved was he to hear this. Afterwards he took an ugly stick and began to beat the serving-girl with all his might, shouting out: "Ah! traitress, you have killed him for me then?" While Felice was cudgelling and she screaming, I was in a dream; I thought the old man held ropes in his hand, and while he was preparing to bind me, Felice had arrived and struck him with an axe, so that the old man fled exclaiming: "Let

me go, and I promise not to return for a long while." Beatrice in the meantime had run into my bedroom shrieking loudly. This woke me up, and I called out: "Leave her alone; perhaps, when she meant to do me harm, she did me more good than you were able to do with all your efforts. She may indeed have saved my life; so lend me a helping hand, for I have sweated; and be quick about it." Felice recovered his spirits, dried and made me comfortable; and I, being conscious of a great improvement in my state, began to reckon on recovery.

When Maestro Francesco appeared and saw my great improvement, and the servant-girl in tears, and the prentice running to and fro, and Felice laughing, all this disturbance made him think that something extraordinary must have happened, which had been the cause of my amendment. Just then the other doctor, Bernardino, put in his appearance, who at the beginning of my illness had refused to bleed me. Maestro Francesco, that most able man, exclaimed: "Oh, power of Nature! She knows what she requires, and the physicians know nothing." That simpleton, Maestro Bernardino, made answer, saying: "If he had drunk another bottle he would have been cured upon the spot." Maestro Francesco da Norcia, a man of age and great authority, said: "That would have been a terrible misfortune, and would to God that it may fall on you!" Afterwards he turned to me and asked if I could have drunk more water. I answered: "No, because I had entirely quenched my thirst." Then he turned to Maestro Bernardino, and said: "Look you how Nature has taken precisely what she wanted, neither more nor less. In like manner she was asking for what she wanted when the poor young man begged you to bleed him. If you knew that his recovery depended upon his drinking two flasks of water, why did you not say so before? You might then have boasted of his cure." At these words the wretched quack sulkily departed, and never showed his face again.

Maestro Francesco then gave orders that I should be removed from my room and carried to one of the hills there are in Rome. Cardinal Cornaro, when he heard of my improvement, had me transported to a place of his on Monte Cavallo. The very evening I was taken with great precautions in a chair, well wrapped up and protected from the cold. No sooner had I reached the place than I began to vomit, during which there came from my stomach a hairy worm about a quarter of a cubit in length: the hairs were long, and the worm was very ugly, speckled of divers colours, green, black, and red. They kept and showed it to the doctor, who said he had never seen anything of the sort before, and afterwards remarked to Felice: "Now take care of your Benvenuto, for he is cured. Do not permit him any irregularities; for though he has escaped this time, another disorder now would be the death of him. You see his malady has been so grave, that if we had brought him the extreme unction, we might not have been in time. Now I know that with a little patience and time he will live to execute more of his fine works." Then he turned to me and said: "My Benvenuto, be prudent, commit no excesses, and when you are quite recovered, I beg you to make me a Madonna with your own hand, and I will always pay my devotions to it for your sake." This I promised to do, and then asked him whether it would be safe for me to travel so far as to Florence. He advised me to wait till I was stronger, and till we could observe how Nature worked in me.

## LXXXVI

WHEN eight days had come and gone, my amendment was so slight that life itself became almost a burden to me; indeed I had been more than fifty days in that great suffering. So I made my mind up, and prepared to travel. My dear Felice and I went toward Florence in a pair of baskets; [1] and as I had not written, when I reached my sister's house, she wept and laughed over me all in one breath. That day many friends came to see me; among others Pier Landi, who was the best and dearest friend I ever had. Next day there came a certain Niccolò da Monte Aguto, who was also a very great friend of mine. Now he had heard the Duke say: "Benvenuto would have done much better to die, because he is come to put his head into a noose, and I will never pardon him." Accordingly when Niccolò arrived, he said to me in desperation: "Alas! my dear Benvenuto, what have you come to do here? Did you not know what you have done to displease the Duke? I have heard him swear that you were thrusting your head into a halter." Then I replied: "Niccolò, remind his Excellency that Pope Clement wanted to do as much to me before, and quite as unjustly; tell him to keep his eye on me, and give me time to recover; then I will show his Excellency that I have been the most faithful servant he will ever have in all his life; and forasmuch as some enemy must have served me this bad turn through envy, let him wait till I get well; for I shall then be able to give such an account of myself as will make him marvel."

This bad turn had been done me by Giorgetto Vassellario of Arezzo,the painter; perchance in recompense for many benefits conferred on him. I had harboured him in Rome and provided for his costs, while he had turned my whole house upside down; for the man was subject to a species of dry scab, which he was always in the habit of scratching with his hands. It happened, then, that sleeping in the same bed as an excellent workman, named Manno, who was in my service, when he meant to scratch himself, he tore the skin from one of Manno's legs with his filthy claws, the nails of which he never used to cut. The said Manno left my service, and was resolutely bent on killing him. I made the quarrel up, and afterwards got Giorgio into Cardinal de' Medici's household, and continually helped him. For these deserts, then, he told Duke Alessandro that I had abused his Excellency, and had bragged I meant to be the first to leap upon the walls of Florence with his foes the exiles. These words, as I afterwards learned, had been put into Vasari's lips by that excellent fellow, [3] Ottaviano de' Medici, who wanted to revenge himself for the Duke's

irritation against him, on account of the coinage and my departure from Florence. I, being innocent of the crime falsely ascribed to me, felt no fear whatever. Meanwhile that able physician Francesco da Monte Varchi attended to my cure with great skill. He had been brought by my very dear friend Luca Martini, who passed the larger portion of the day with me.

## LXXXVII

DURING this while I had sent my devoted comrade Felice back to Rome, to look after our business there. When I could raise my head a little from the bolster, which was at the end of fifteen days, although I was unable to walk upon my feet, I had myself carried to the palace of the Medici, and placed upon the little upper terrace. There they seated me to wait until the Duke went by. Many of my friends at court came up to greet me, and expressed surprise that I had undergone the inconvenience of being carried in that way, while so shattered by illness; they said that I ought to have waited till I was well, and then to have visited the Duke. A crowd of them collected, all looking at me as a sort of miracle; not merely because they had heard that I was dead, but far more because I had the look of a dead man. Then publicly, before them all, I said how some wicked scoundrel had told my lord the Duke that I had bragged I meant to be the first to scale his Excellency's walls, and also that I had abused him personally; wherefore I had not the heart to live or die till I had purged myself of that infamy, and found out who the audacious rascal was who had uttered such calumnies against me. At these words a large number of those gentlemen came round, expressing great compassion for me; one said one thing, one another, and I told them I would never go thence before I knew who had accused me. At these words Maestro Agostino, the Duke's tailor, made his way through all those gentlemen, and said: "If that is all you want to know, you shall know, it at this very moment."

Giorgio the painter, whom I have mentioned, happened just then to pass, and Maestro Agostino exclaimed: "There is the man who accused you; now you know yourself if it be true or not." As fiercely as I could, not being able to leave my seat, I asked Giorgio if it was true that he had accused me. He denied that it was so, and that he had ever said anything of the sort. Maestro Agostino retorted: "You gallows-bird! don't you know that I know it for most certain?" Giorgio made off as quickly as he could, repeating that he had not accused me. Then, after a short while, the Duke came by; whereupon I had myself raised up before his Excellency, and he halted. I told him that I had come therein that way solely in order to clear my character. The Duke gazed at me, and marvelled I was still alive; afterwards he bade me take heed to be an honest man and regain my health.

When I reached home, Niccolò da Monte Aguto came to visit me, and told me that I had escaped one of the most dreadful perils in the world, quite contrary to all his expectations, for he had seen my ruin written with indelible ink; now I must make haste to get well, and afterwards take French leave, because my jeopardy came from a quarter and a man who was able to destroy me. He then said, "Beware," and added: "What displeasure have you given to that rascal Ottaviano de' Medici?" I answered that I had done nothing to displease him, but that he had injured me; and told him all the affair about the Mint. He repeated: "Get hence as quickly as you can, and be of good courage, for you will see your vengeance executed sooner than you expect." I the best attention to my health, gave Pietro Pagolo advice about stamping the coins, and then went off upon my way to Rome without saying a word to the Duke or anybody else.

# The Huldrefish by Jonas Lie

Jonas Lie was a Norwegian folklorist who collected stories, somewhat in the tradition of the Grimm brothers. His work was translated into English early in the Twentieth Century. Eating the Huldrefish seems to give access to a regio, and it has many creatures from Faerie in it. The one I find most interesting is the lichworm, that burrows through the Earth to seek out corpses.

Thanks to Daniel Davison, his production team, and Librivox generally. Stats eventually.

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It was such an odd trout that Nona hauled in at the end of his fishing-line. Large and fat, red spotted and shiny, it sprawled and squirmed, with its dirty yellow belly above the water, to wriggle off the hook. And when he got it into the boat, and took it off the hook, he saw that it had only two small slits where the eyes should have been.

It must be a huldrefish, thought one of the boatmen, for rumour had it that that lake was one of those which had a double bottom.

But Nona didn't trouble his head very much about what sort of a fish it was, so long as it was a big one. He was ravenously hungry, and bawled to them to row as rapidly as possible ashore so as to get it cooked.

He had been sitting the whole afternoon with empty lines out in the mountain lake there; but as for the trout, it was only an hour ago since it had been steering its way through the water with its rudder of a tail, and allowed itself to be fooled by a hook, and already it lay cooked red there on the dish.

But now Nona recollected about the strange eyes, and felt for them, and pricked away at its head with his fork. There was nothing but slits outside, and yet there was a sort of hard eyeball inside. The head was strangely shaped, and looked very peculiar in many respects.

He was vexed that he had not examined it more closely before it was cooked; it was not so easy now to make out what it really was. It had tasted first-rate, however, and that was something.

But at night there was, as it were, a gleam of bright water before his eyes, and he lay half asleep, thinking of the odd fish he had pulled up.

He was in his boat again, he thought, and it seemed to him as if his hands felt the fish wriggling and sprawling for its life, and shooting its snout backwards and forwards to get off the hook.

All at once it grew so heavy and strong that it drew the boat after it by the line.

It went along at a frightful speed, while the lake gradually diminished, as it were, and dried up.

There was an irresistible sucking of the water in the direction the fish went, which was towards a hole at the bottom of the lake like a funnel, and right into this hole went the boat.

It glided for a long time in a sort of twilight along a subterranean river, which dashed and splashed about him. The air that met him was, at first, chilly and cellar-like; gradually, however, it grew milder and milder, and warmer and warmer.

The stream now flowed along calmly and quietly, and broadened out continually till it fell into a large lake.

Beyond the borders of this lake, but only half visible in the gloom, stretched swamps and morasses, where he heard sounds as of huge beasts wading and trampling. Serpent like they rose and writhed with a crashing and splashing and snorting amidst the tepid mud and mire.

By the phosphorescent gleams he saw various fishes close to his boat, but all of them lacked eyes.

And he caught glimpses of the outlines of gigantic sea-serpents stretching far away into the darkness. He now understood that it was from down here that they pop up their heads off the coast in the dog days when the sea is warm.

The lindworm, with its flat head and duck's beak, darted after fish, and crept up to the surface of the earth through the slimy ways of mire and marsh.

Through the warm and choking gloom there came, from time to time, a cooling chilling blast from the cold curves and winds of the slimy and slippery greenish lichworm,2 which bores its way through the earth and eats away the coffins that are rotting in the churchyards.

Horrible shapeless monsters, with streaming manes, such as are said to sometimes appear in mountain tarns, writhed and wallowed and seized their prey in the fens and marshes.

And he caught glimpses of all sorts of humanlike creatures, such as fishermen and sailors meet and marvel at on the sea, and landsmen see outside the elfin mounds.

And, besides, that there was a soft whizzing and an endless hovering and swarming of beings, whose shapes were nevertheless invisible to the eye of man.

Then the boat glided into miry pulpy water, where her course tended downwards, and where the earth-vault above darkened as it sank lower and lower.

All at once a blinding strip of light shot down from a bright blue slit high, high, above him.

A stuffy vapour stood round about him. The water was as yellow and turbid as that which comes out of steam boilers.

And he called to mind the peculiar tepid undrinkable water which bubbles up by the side of artesian wells. It was quite hot. Up there they were boring down to a world of warm watercourses and liquid strata beneath the earth’s crust.

Heat as from an oven rose up from the huge abysses and dizzying clefts, whilst mighty steaming waterfalls roared and shook the ground.

All at once he felt as if his body were breaking loose, freeing itself, and rising in the air. He had a feeling of infinite lightness, of a wondrous capability for floating in higher atmospheres and recovering equilibrium.

And, before he knew how it was, he found himself up on the earth again.

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# The Invisible Monster / The Horror at Martin's Beach by Sonia Greene

This is the monster for the month. Greene was a an independently wealthy heiress and later a journalist. I believe Greene wrote this before her marriage to HP Lovecraft, although I've read he may have helped edit this in some way. Stats eventually.

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I have never heard an even approximately adequate explanation of the horror at Martin's Beach. Despite the large number of witnesses, no two accounts agree; and the testimony taken by local authorities contains the most amazing discrepancies.

Perhaps this haziness is natural in view of the unheard-of character of the horror itself, the almost paralytic terror of all who saw it, and the efforts made by the fashionable Wavecrest Inn to hush it up after the publicity created by Prof. Ahon's article "Are Hypnotic Powers Confined to Recognized Humanity?"

Against all these obstacles I am striving to present a coherent version; for I beheld the hideous occurrence, and believe it should be known in view of the appalling possibilities it suggests. Martin's Beach is once more popular as a watering-place, but I shudder when I think of it. Indeed, I cannot look at the ocean at all now without shuddering.

Fate is not always without a sense of drama and climax, hence the terrible happening of August 8, 1922, swiftly followed a period of minor and agreeably wonder-fraught excitement at Martin's Beach. On May 17 the crew of the fishing smack Alma of Gloucester, under Capt. James P. Orne, killed, after a battle of nearly forty hours, a marine monster whose size and aspect produced the greatest possible stir in scientific circles and caused certain Boston naturalists to take every precaution for its taxidermic preservation.

The object was some fifty feet in length, of roughly cylindrical shape, and about ten feet in diameter. It was unmistakably a gilled fish in its major affiliations; but with certain curious modifications such as rudimentary forelegs and six-toed feet in place of pectoral fins, which prompted the widest speculation. Its extraordinary mouth, its thick and scaly hide, and its single, deep-set eye were wonders scarcely less remarkable than its colossal dimensions; and when the naturalists pronounced it an infant organism, which could not have been hatched more than a few days, public interest mounted to extraordinary heights.

Capt. Orne, with typical Yankee shrewdness, obtained a vessel large enough to hold the object in its hull, and arranged for the exhibition of his prize. With judicious carpentry he prepared what amounted to an excellent marine museum, and, sailing south to the wealthy resort district of Martin's Beach, anchored at the hotel wharf and reaped a harvest of admission fees.

The intrinsic marvelousness of the object, and the importance which it clearly bore in the minds of many scientific visitors from near and far, combined to make it the season's sensation. That it was absolutely unique—unique to a scientifically revolutionary degree—was well understood. The naturalists had shown plainly that it radically differed from the similarly immense fish caught off the Florida coast; that, while it was obviously an inhabitant of almost incredible depths, perhaps thousands of feet, its brain and principal organs indicated a development startlingly vast, and out of all proportion to anything hitherto associated with the fish tribe.

On the morning of July 20 the sensation was increased by the loss of the vessel and its strange treasure. In the storm of the preceding night it had broken from its moorings and vanished forever from the sight of man, carrying with it the guard who had slept aboard despite the threatening weather. Capt. Orne, backed by extensive scientific interests and aided by large numbers of fishing boats from Gloucester, made a thorough and exhaustive searching cruise, but with no result other than the prompting of interest and conversation. By August 7 hope was abandoned, and Capt. Orne had returned to the Wavecrest Inn to wind up his business affairs at Martin's Beach and confer with certain of the scientific men who remained there. The horror came on August 8.

It was in the twilight, when grey sea-birds hovered low near the shore and a rising moon began to make a glittering path across the waters. The scene is important to remember, for every impression counts. On the beach were several strollers and a few late bathers; stragglers from the distant cottage colony that rose modestly on a green hill to the north, or from the adjacent cliff-perched Inn whose imposing towers proclaimed its allegiance to wealth and grandeur.

Well within viewing distance was another set of spectators, the loungers on the Inn's high-ceiled and lantern-lighted veranda, who appeared to be enjoying the dance music from the sumptuous ballroom inside. These spectators, who included Capt. Orne and his group of scientific confreres, joined the beach group before the horror progressed far; as did many more from the Inn.

Certainly there was no lack of witnesses, confused though their stories be with fear and doubt of what they saw.

There is no exact record of the time the thing began, although a majority say that the fairly round moon was “about a foot” above the low-lying vapors of the horizon. They mention the moon because what they saw seemed subtly connected with it—a sort of stealthy, deliberate, menacing ripple which rolled in from the far skyline along the shimmering lane of reflected moonbeams, yet which seemed to subside before it reached the shore.

Many did not notice this ripple until reminded by later events; but it seems to have been very marked, differing in height and motion from the normal waves around it. Some called it cunning and calculating. And as it died away craftily by the black reefs afar out, there suddenly came belching up out of the glitter-streaked brine a cry of death; a scream of anguish and despair that moved pity even while it mocked it.

First to respond to the cry were the two life guards then on duty; sturdy fellows in white bathing attire, with their calling proclaimed in large red letters across their chests. Accustomed as they were to rescue work, and to the screams of the drowning, they could find nothing familiar in the unearthly ululation; yet with a trained sense of duty they ignored the strangeness and proceeded to follow their usual course.

Hastily seizing an air-cushion, which with its attached coil of rope lay always at hand, one of them ran swiftly along the shore to the scene of the gathering crowd; whence, after whirling it about to gain momentum, he flung the hollow disc far out in the direction from which the sound had come. As the cushion disappeared in the waves, the crowd curiously awaited a sight of the hapless being whose distress had been so great; eager to see the rescue made by the massive rope.

But that rescue was soon acknowledged to be no swift and easy matter; for, pull as they might on the rope, the two muscular guards could not move the object at the other end. Instead, they found that object pulling with equal or even greater force in the very opposite direction, till in a few seconds they were dragged off their feet and into the water by the strange power which had seized on the proffered life-preserver.

One of them, recovering himself, called immediately for help from the crowd on the shore, to whom he flung the remaining coil of rope; and in a moment the guards were seconded by all the hardier men, among whom Capt. Orne was foremost. More than a dozen strong hands were now tugging desperately at the stout line, yet wholly without avail.

Hard as they tugged, the strange force at the other end tugged harder; and since neither side relaxed for an instant, the rope became rigid as steel with the enormous strain. The struggling participants, as well as the spectators, were by this time consumed with curiosity as to the nature of the force in the sea. The idea of a drowning man had long been dismissed; and hints of whales, submarines, monsters, and demons now passed freely around. Where humanity had first led the rescuers, wonder kept them at their task; and they hauled with a grim determination to uncover the mystery.

It being decided at last that a whale must have swallowed the air-cushion, Capt. Orne, as a natural leader, shouted to those on shore that a boat must be obtained in order to approach, harpoon, and land the unseen leviathan. Several men at once prepared to scatter in quest of a suitable craft, while others came to supplant the captain at the straining rope, since his place was logically with whatever boat party might be formed. His own idea of the situation was very broad, and by no means limited to whales, since he had to do with a monster so much stranger. He wondered what might be the acts and manifestations of an adult of the species of which the fifty-foot creature had been the merest infant.

And now there developed with appalling suddenness the crucial fact which changed the entire scene from one of wonder to one of horror, and dazed with fright the assembled band of toilers and onlookers. Capt. Orne, turning to leave his post at the rope, found his hands held in their place with unaccountable strength; and in a moment he realized that he was unable to let go of the rope. His plight was instantly divined, and as each companion tested his own situation the same condition was encountered. The fact could not be denied—every struggler was irresistibly held in some mysterious bondage to the hempen line which was slowly, hideously, and relentlessly pulling them out to sea.

Speechless horror ensued; a horror in which the spectators were petrified to utter inaction and mental chaos. Their complete demoralization is reflected in the conflicting accounts they give, and the sheepish excuses they offer for their seemingly callous inertia. I was one of them, and know.

Even the strugglers, after a few frantic screams and futile groans, succumbed to the paralyzing influence and kept silent and fatalistic in the face of unknown powers. There they stood in the pallid moonlight, blindly pulling against a spectral doom and swaying monotonously backward and forward as the water rose first to their knees, then to their hips. The moon went partly under a cloud, and in the half-light the line of swaying men resembled some sinister and gigantic centipede, writhing in the clutch of a terrible creeping death.

Harder and harder grew the rope, as the tug in both directions increased, and the strands swelled with the undisturbed soaking of the rising waves. Slowly the tide advanced, till the sands so lately peopled by laughing children and whispering lovers were now swallowed by the inexorable flow. The herd of panic-stricken watchers

surged blindly backward as the water crept above their feet, while the frightful line of strugglers swayed hideously on, half submerged, and now at a substantial distance from their audience. Silence was complete.

The crowd, having gained a huddling-place beyond reach of the tide, stared in mute fascination; without offering a word of advice or encouragement, or attempting any kind of assistance. There was in the air a nightmare fear of impending evils such as the world had never before known.

Minutes seemed lengthened into hours, and still that human snake of swaying torsos was seen above the fast rising tide. Rhythmically it undulated; slowly, horribly, with the seal of doom upon it. Thicker clouds now passed over the ascending moon, and the glittering path on the waters faded nearly out.

Very dimly writhed the serpentine line of nodding heads, with now and then the livid face of a backward-glancing victim gleaming pale in the darkness. Faster and faster gathered the clouds, till at length their angry rifts shot down sharp tongues of febrile flame. Thunders rolled, softly at first, yet soon increasing to a deafening, maddening intensity. Then came a culminating crash—a shock whose reverberations seemed to shake land and sea alike—and on its heels a cloudburst whose drenching violence overpowered the darkened world as if the heavens themselves had opened to pour forth a vindictive torrent.

The spectators, instinctively acting despite the absence of conscious and coherent thought, now retreated up the cliff steps to the hotel veranda. Rumors had reached the guests inside, so that the refugees found a state of terror nearly equal to their own. I think a few frightened words were uttered, but cannot be sure.

Some, who were staying at the Inn, retired in terror to their rooms; while others remained to watch the fast sinking victims as the line of bobbing heads showed above the mounting waves in the fitful lightning flashes. I recall thinking of those heads, and the bulging eyes they must contain; eyes that might well reflect all the fright, panic, and delirium of a malignant universe—all the sorrow, sin, and misery, blasted hopes and unfulfilled desires, fear, loathing and anguish of the ages since time’s beginning; eyes alight with all the soul-racking pain of eternally blazing infernos.

And as I gazed out beyond the heads, my fancy conjured up still another eye; a single eye, equally alight, yet with a purpose so revolting to my brain that the vision soon passed. Held in the clutches of an unknown vise, the line of the damned dragged on; their silent screams and unuttered prayers known only to the demons of the black waves and the night-wind.

There now burst from the infuriate sky such a mad cataclysm of satanic sound that even the former crash seemed dwarfed. Amidst a blinding glare of descending fire the voice of heaven resounded with the blasphemies of hell, and the mingled agony of all the lost reverberated in one apocalyptic, planet-rending peal of Cyclopean din. It was the end of the storm, for with uncanny suddenness the rain ceased and the moon once more cast her pallid beams on a strangely quieted sea.

There was no line of bobbing heads now. The waters were calm and deserted, and broken only by the fading ripples of what seemed to be a whirlpool far out in the path of the moonlight whence the strange cry had first come. But as I looked along that treacherous lane of silvery sheen, with fancy fevered and senses overwrought, there trickled upon my ears from some abysmal sunken waste the faint and sinister echoes of a laugh.

# The Lavender Dragon by Eden Phillpotts

I'm disappointed.

I thought I'd found a fantasy author who used the areas around Devon as his canvas, and I had. This would have let me push the free material for Ars Magica further east, to join up with the Cornwall and Bristol channel material already available. The problem is that now I've discovered that Phillpotts abused his daughter for thirty years, its very difficult to listen to his dragon pontificate upon the principles of enlightened society. To salvage an episode: the core idea is good for Ars Magica, so let's explore it in general.

Decades ago, a dragon and his mate were ambushed by humans with crossbows, and the female dragon died. The male dragon avenged himself, buried his partner, and decided this war between the species needed to end before his own people were entirely extinct, The only way to assure this was to improve the morals of humans.

He sets up a community by abducting people who are outsiders, and bringing them to his bride's grave, which is now a lavender covered hillock. Single mothers shunned by their villages. Artists, dreamers, foreigners, minor criminals. As he collects people, they also suggest others who might like to be collected. The humans build huts, and eventually, a walled town, with the dragon's aid. The dragon helps them live a life somewhat better than that of the average medieval peasant, and they have enough free time to consider seriously questions about how life should be lived. It's basically a rationalist utopia sitting on the back of the muscle power of a dragon. Eventually he even abducts a priest and helps him build a church, because humans like that sort of thing.

The story starts when a knight is hired to kill the dragon, and is instead kidnapped to the utopia. The dragon, it turns out, is dying. He's very old, and has been kept in good health by the liniments of an alchemist who lives in the town. As the dragon gets weaker, people debate what to do after he passes away. At his death, his rule that people may not leave the community ends, the walls are cast down. Some people stay on, particularly the younger ones who have no desire to join medieval English society. Others become missionaries for the town's philosophy, going back to their old villages. These become potential covenfolk and plot hooks, respectively.

The dragon, himself, sensing death approach, designs a sort of platform on a metal track and crawls up on it, so that he's easier to bury. He rests beside his wife in the hill, in the middle of the town, covered in flowers. This is obviously a vis source. That it was the laid of a dragon, and the grave of two, means it has an Aura. The walls can be put back up again pretty easily and the dragon's defensive earthwors are still in place. It seems the dragon took his mate's body to some remote place before burial, so its further suitable for a covenant.

The whole novel is available from LibriVox and Internet Archive, and I was going to do one of my lengthy dissections, but, seriously, once I found out what Phillpotts was like as a person my desire to go through his work with a tooth-comb vanished.

# The Vendor of Tears by William M. Conselman

This is our monster for the month. He's clearly a faerie who sells Arcane Connections. Stats eventually.

This recording was released through Librivox by Dale Grothmann. Thanks to Dale and his production team.

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The Vendor of Tears
By William M . Conselman
The little old man closed my library door and stepped nimbly forward. He bowed until his long
beard touched the rug, and said: " I have something to sell you."

" What do you sell, good sir?" I asked courteously, for though he might be nothing more than a figment of my imagination, it is always well to be polite.

" Tears," he answered; "women's tears."

He unstrapped a flat leather case and laid it open on the table. As I peered curiously over his shoulder, he covered it with his hands, and demanded in concern:

" You are not by any chance a poet, sir ?"

I shook my head, and he smiled with evident relief.

"I do not traffic with poets," he said. "Although they bring me a deal of business."

Fastened in the case were a dozen or more exquisitely tiny crystal phials, carven in various shapes, glowing and sparkling like jewels. From the slender ribbon that held it, he took a phial whose contents were a pale, translucent blue, like a bit of April sky prisoned in glass.

"Here," he said, "are tears that a maiden wept at midnight in her chamber." He held it to the light.

" Pretty," I said. "Pretty, but common. Pardon me," I continued, "but have your baubles any practical value? Of what use are they?"

" Practical ?" He puffed out his cheeks indignantly. " I would have you know, young sir, that with my wares you may buy almost any unpurchasable commodity in the world. But while they are so valuable, you cannot sell them. Unless you are a poet. Poets sell them. Do you desire Love, or Knowledge, or Sorrow? You may purchase them with women's tears. Delight and despair, madness and misery—these, too, one buys with the goods I vend."

He replaced the first phial and took out another, of a dull, grayish-purple colour, like the bloom of a grape.

These are the tears of a spinster for the son she never bore," he said. He held up another tube of deepest indigo shot with canary. "An actress wept these upon discovering a gray hair."

His bright eyes gazed a question. I shook my head.

"Well, then," he said, "here is something pretty. Expensive, however." He displayed a phial of beautiful, iridescent crimson, like transparent blood. "A mother's tribute to a wayward son who
was hanged. Will you buy?"

" I have seen nothing that interests me," I said.

"Eh, sir, but you are hard to please," he said testily. "What would you?"

" Show me," I said firmly, "the pale green tears that a woman sheds when she forgives a rival who has worsted her."

He gave me a long, angry look. "Now you are a poet after all," he accused, " since none but a poet could imagine such tears as you ask for!"

And before I could offer a word of remonstrance, he vanished as suddenly
as he had appeared.

# Venice – The Confined Canoness

This week a little sliver of Venice.

This is from my recording of the biography of the dogaressas of Venice for Librivox. It's the story of the daughter of a doge who was married into a rival family. When the rival family rebelled anyway she, and all of her children, and anyone who was married to the rebels, was banished. She made her way back to Venice and was punished terribly for it.

I think she may be my ambassador for Hell to the Serenessima that we're developing. I kept developing port factotems as the chief devil for Venice and somehow they kept turning up a little bit like the Ambassador in Fallen London: a little too suave, a little too demonic. Instead I'm going to have a deeply wronged woman for whom an infernal pact was an escape. My working name for her is the Confined Canoness. Like the other members of her order she will be double veiled, except one of her veils – the inner one – will be red.

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Although Doge Sorenzo's public life was so successful and so popular, in private his heart and that of the dogaressa were broken by anxiety and sorrow. Thus evenly our mundane affairs are balanced. The story of Donna Soranza, their dearly loved daughter is as sad as that can be.

Married to Nicolo, eldest son of Marco Quirino the leader of the Quirino-Tiepolo conspiracy, he was exiled with his wife the very day his father's head fell to the executioner's axe. They made their home at Zara, but Nicolo survived his expatriation but four years when he too fell, stabbed by an unknown hand. The widowed Madonna sought to return to Venice and returned to her father's home but her appeals were all in vain. Doge Soranzo, like another Brutus, treated his daughter's pleas with quite uncalled for severity. At last she determined to throw herself upon the mercy of the Council of 40, and making her way hopefully she presented herself dutifully to her father and mother.

That was a mournful homecoming, and mother and daughter clasped in each other's arms resisted the austere ruling of the doge, who had informed the council of his daughter's return.

In spite of all good Dogaressa Franciscena could say or do her unhappy child was torn from her embrace and contempt to perpetual exclusion in the convent of Santa Maria de la Virgine. Gentle women of Madonna Soranza Quirini's position were styled canonesses and each had her own little casa, and a domestic servant who was allowed to go out washing and was permitted to make purchases for her mistress and even to convey messages to her friends. The poor ladies were not suffered even to visit each other and they could only take exercise in the convent garden.

At rare and stated intervals every year the doge paid a ceremonial visit to the convent where he was received with great honour by the abbess and the superior canonesses, who were all arranged in magnificent white silk brigade robes, and each wore two veils, one black and one white signifying that though, they were in the world they were not of it. The abbess handed the doge a bouquet of sweet flowers in a golden jeweled holder and he bestowed in return caskets of sweet meats upon the devout recluses.

Never once did father and daughter meet. She yearned to embrace him and her mother but he never even made inquiries about her. She was dead to the world to the family and to him a spartan father's discipline letters and messages were all in vain. Unhappy Madonna Soranza's only consolation was the companionship of another Quirino widow, Andreola, who remained a very short time in the convent. farasuta appeared in the person of Angelo Bembo, and he was permitted to remove his innamorata to the convent of Santa Maria de Valverde upon the island of Mazzorbo, where they were married. Alas poor Madonna saranza had no such fortune, but she pined and pined in her solitude, and after 25 years of suffering she laid her down and died, 20 years after the death of her stern father.

Certainly an edict passed in 1313 sentenced the wives of rebels and outlaws, with their children, to perpetual exile, and they were warned that unsanctioned return to Venice would be visited with perpetual confinement. Undoubtedly this proved the rule, as sententious writers have noted, the sternness of justice is superior to the tenderness of affection.

# Atlantis by Clark Ashton Smith

A quick bonus episode to give you a little regio, from the poetry of Clark Ashton Smith. The recording was released through Librivox by Rosslyn Carlyle. Thanks to her and her production team.

*Above its domes the gulfs accumulate.*
*Far up, the sea-gales blare their bitter screed:*
*But here the buried waters take no heed—*
*Deaf, and with welded lips pressed down by weight*
*Of the upper ocean. Dim, interminate,*
*In cities over-webbed with somber weed,*
*Where galleons crumble and the krakens breed,*
*The slow tide coils through sunken court and gate.*

*From out the ocean’s phosphor-starry dome,*
*A ghostly light is dubitably shed*
*On altars of a goddess garlanded*
*With blossoms of some weird and hueless vine;*
*And, wingéd, fleet, through skies beneath the foam,*
*Like silent birds the sea-things dart and shine.*