

MUSINGS

Lady, Go Dive (Ah!)



This pirate I am is factotum, general servant of diverse responsibility and action. But of the many tasks needed to keep our vessel afloat, the fact is that the most essential is that of story telling.

What value do you place upon my story telling? I am sure, since you are still reading, that my story telling has some intrinsic value for you. But is the value of the hue one relatively light or shamefully dark? What is your fundamental assumption?

The true is most often associated with the light as in bright, visible. And with the heavy, as in weighty and firm. Our words "true" and "tree" have the same Old English root that means the firmness of wood, the deeply rooted. So the truth is solid and clear and visible. The truth is locatable and verifiable. Truth is graspable. We say the truth is real, and our word "real" comes from the Latin res, which means "thing." So, like real things, truth is real and really concrete.

And the true is valued, taken to be of worth, of strength, of purpose. We trust in this.

But trust always involves risk. If

there were no risk, trust would not be necessary. Our trusting means that we are inclined, at least in a particular moment, to expect the best from that which is trusted. What is the best that can be expected from the truth?

Our trust in the true is based upon the presentation of facts. The word "fact" originally indicated action, and in the earliest etymology these actions bore the connotation of evil deeds. Like our expression "fact of life," harsh circumstances of which we must bear the brunt and sorrow are intimidated. It is what it is: Grin and bear it.

Or grin and bare it: My story today is that of the Lady Godiva. In doing my obligatory fact check, I find that Lady Godiva was a noblewoman, equestrian, art patron, tax protester, wife of Leofric III, Earl of Mercia. They lived in the 11th century in Coventry. They were both Christian, and founded an abbey. Lady Godiva was particularly devoted to Mary, the pure mother of God. She wanted to emulate the purity of her model. She also wanted to commission a portrait of herself in order to stimulate interest in the arts in the people.

She came to realize that the people were not interested in the art scene because they had to spend all their time working just to eat and pay their taxes. Her husband was the person responsible for the high taxation of

everything, including manure. So Lady Godiva begged Leofric to lower the taxes so that the people would not be so burdened by struggle merely to obtain the necessities of life.

Leofric was loathe to give up the gains he received from his taxation. So he proposed what he felt was a deal that would guarantee the continuation of his extreme taxation and the benefits that brought him. Knowing his Lady's modesty and devotion to the purest woman Mary, he felt that his suggesting that Godiva ride through the town square stark naked in the middle of the day, in exchange for a decrease in the taxes, would be impossible for her.

But little did Leofric realize that the Lady Godiva was a pirate. She was

able to tell her own story. For her, the purity of her intention to help her beloved people was more true, more fact, than the lessons on the sexual facts of life that might be impurely gathered in the sight of her merely physical nakedness.

So we can imagine her, tall and lovely astride her horse, covered in her long hair and shameless.

And pirate that I am, like her, I can do a dance with facts as well. I can turn the street before her into liquid that pulls her under. Lady, go dive! And ah, she goes into the spin she created of her own value and of her own reality. I dream with her that she set herself free to create not only

her self-portrait but also new lives of some added flexibility for her people. She does this by becoming boundless, water mixing with water, riding as waves that mix hair and breast and beast and vision.

This ever-changing fluid Godiva takes risk and in so doing brings us the best we can expect from the truth. With unashamedly factoid musings, dark and light with the unbearable lightness of Kundera's being, this pirate becomes the ungraspable truer than true. Ah, we are the firmness of no ground and factotum of piracy. ■

— Rx is the FloridaWeekly muse who hopes to inspire profound mutiny in all those who care to read. Our Rx may be wearing a pirate cloak of invisibility, but emanating from within this shadow is hope that readers will feel free to respond. Who knows: You may even inspire the muse. Make contact if you dare.



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