

***THE GOLDEN
ASSE
BOOK VII
By
Lucius
Apuleius "Africanus"***

THE SEVENTH BOOK

THE TWENTY-FOURTH CHAPTER

How hee that was left behinde at Hippata did bring newes concerning the robbery of Miloes house, came home and declared to his Company, that all the fault was laid to one Apuleius his charge.

A soone as night was past, and the cleare Chariot of the Sunne had spred his bright beames on every coast, came one of the company of the theeves, (for so his and their greeting together did declare) who at the first entry into the Cave (after hee had breathed himselfe, and was able to speake) told these tydings unto his companions in this sort. Sirs, as touching the house of Milo of Hippata, which we forcibly entred and ransackt the last day, we may put away all feare and doubt nothing at all. For after that ye by force of armes, had spoyled and taken away all things in the house, and returned hither into our Cave; I (thrusting my selfe amongst the presse of the people, and shewing my selfe as though I were sad and sorrowful for the mischance) consulted with them for the boulting out of the matter, and devising what meanes might be wrought for the apprehension of the theeves, to the intent I might learne and see all that was done to make relation thereof unto you as you willed me, insomuch that the whole fact at length by manifest and evident proofes as also by the common opinion and judgement of the people, was laid to one Lucius Apuleius charge as manifest author of this common robbery, who a few dayse before by false and forged letters and colored honesty, fell so farre in favour with this Milo, that he entertained him into his house, and received him as a chiefe of his familiar friends, which Lucius after that he had sojourned there a good space, and won the heart of Miloes Maid, by fained love, did thoroughly learne the waies and doores of all the house, and curiously viewed the cofers and chests, wherein was laid the whole substance of Milo: neither was there small cause given to judge him culpable, since as the very same night that this robbery was done he fled away, and could not be found in no place: and to the intent hee might cleane escape, and better prevent such as made hew and crie after him, he tooke his white horse and galloped away, and after this, his servant was found in the house, who (accused as accessory to the fellony and escape of his Master) was committed to

the common gaole, and the next day following was cruelly scourged and tormented till hee was welnigh dead, to the intent hee should confesse the matter, but when they could wreast or learne no such thing of him, yet sent they many persons after, towardes Lucius Countrey to enquire him out, and so to take him prisoner. As he declared these things, I did greatly lament with my selfe, to thinke of mine old and pristine estate, and what felicity I was sometimes in, in comparison to the misery that I presently susteined, being changed into a miserable Asse, then had I no small occasion to remember, how the old and ancient Writers did affirme, that fortune was starke blind without eies, because she alwaies bestoweth her riches upon evil persons, and fooles, and chooseth or favoureth no mortall person by judgement, but is alwaies conversent, especially with much as if she could see, she should most shunne, and forsake, yea and that which is more worse, she sheweth such evill or contrary opinions in men, that the wicked doe glory with the name of good, and contrary the good and innocent be detracted and slandred as evill. Furthermore I, who by her great cruelty, was turned into a foure footed Asse, in most vile and abject manner: yea, and whose estate seemed worthily to be lamented and pittied of the most hard and stonie hearts, was accused of theft and robbing of my deare host Milo, which villany might rather be called parricide then theft, yet might not I defend mine owne cause or denie the fact any way, by reason I could not speake; howbeit least my conscience should seeme to accuse me by reason of silence, and againe being enforced by impatience I endeavored to speake, and faine would have said, Never did I that fact, and verely the first word, never, I cried out once or twice, somewhat handsome, but the residue I could in no wise pronounce, but still remaining in one voice, cried, Never, never, never, howbeit I settled my hanging lips as round as I could to speake the residue: but why should I further complaine of the crueltie of my fortune, since as I was not much ashamed, by reason that my servant and my horse, was likewise accused with me of the robbery.

While I pondered with my selfe all these things, a great care [came] to my remembrance, touching the death, which the theeves provised for me and the maiden, and still as I looked downe to my belly, I thought of my poore gentlewoman that should be closed within me. And the theefe which a little before had brought the false

newes against me, drew out of the skirt of his coate, a thousand crowns, which he had rifled from such as hee met, and brought it into the common treasury. Then hee carefully enquired how the residue of his companions did. To whom it was declared that the most valiant was murdred and slaine in divers manners, whereupon he perswaded them to remit all their affaires a certaine season, and to seeke for other fellowes to be in their places, that by the exercise of new lads, the terror of their martiall band might be reduced to the old number, assuring them that such as were unwilling, might be compelled by menaces and threatnings, and such as were willing might be encouraged forward with reward. Further he said, that there were some, which (seeing the profite which they had) would forsake their base and servile estate, and rather bee contented to live like tyrants amongst them. Moreover he declared, that for his part he had spoken with a certaine tall man, a valiant companion, but of young age, stout in body, and couragious in fight, whom he had fully perswaded to exercise his idle hands, dull with slothfullnesse, to his greater profit, and (while he might) to receive the blisse of better Fortune, and not to hold out his sturdy arme to begge for a penny, but rather to take as much gold and silver as hee would. Then everyone consented, that hee that seemed so worthy to be their companion, should be one of their company, and that they would search for others to make up the residue of the number, whereupon he went out, and by and by (returning againe) brought in a tall young man (as he promised) to whom none of the residue might bee compared, for hee was higher then they by the head, and of more bignesse in body, his beard began to burgen, but hee was poorely apparelled, insomuch that you might see all his belly naked. As soone as he was entred in he said, God speed yee souldiers of Mars and my faithfull companions, I pray you make me one of your band, and I will ensure you, that you shall have a man of singular courage and lively audacity: for I had rather receive stripes upon my backe, then money or gold in my hands. And as for death (which every man doth feare) I passe nothing at all, yet thinke you not that I am an abject or a begger, neither judge you my vertue and prowesse by ragged clothes, for I have beene a Captaine of a great company, and subdued all the countrey of Macedonia. I am the renowned theefe Hemes the Thracian, whose name all countreys and nations do so greatly feare: I am the sonne of Theron the noble theefe, nourished with humane bloud, entertained amongst the stoutest; finally I am

inheritour and follower of all my fathers vertues, yet I lost in a short time all my company and all my riches, by one assault, which I made upon a Factor of the Prince, which sometime had beene Captaine of two hundred men, for fortune was cleane against me; harken and I will tell you the whole matter. There was a certaine man in the court of the Emperour, which had many offices, and in great favour, who at last by the envy of divers persons, was banished away and compelled to forsake the court: his wife Platina, a woman of rare faith and singular shamefastnes having borne ten children to her husband, despised all worldly Pompe and delicacy, and determined to follow her husband, and to be partaker of his perils and danger, wherefore shee cut off her haire, disguised her selfe like a man, and tooke with her all her treasure, passing through the hands of the souldiers, and the naked swords without any feare, whereby she endured many miseries, and was partaker of much affliction, to save the life of her husband, such was her love which she bare unto him. And when they had escaped many perillous dangers, as well by land as by sea, they went together towards Zacynthe, to continue there according as fortune had appointed. But when they were arived on the sea coast of Actium (where we in our returne from Macedony were roving about) when night came, they returned into a house not far distant from their ship, where they lay all night. Then we entred in and tooke away all their substance, but verely we were in great danger: for the good matron perceiving us incontinently by the noise of the gate, went into the chamber, and called up every man by his name, and likewise the neighbors that dwelled round about, insomuch that by reason of the feare that every one was in, we hardly escaped away, but this most holy woman, faithfull and true to her husband (as the truth must be declared) returned to Caesar, desiring his aid and puissance, and demanding vengeance of the injury done to her husband, who granted all her desire: then went my company to wracke, insomuch that every man was slaine, so great was the authority and word of the Prince. Howbeit, when all my band was lost, and taken by search of the Emperours army, I onely stole away and delivered my selfe from the violence of the souldiers, for I clothed my selfe in a womans attire, and mounted upon an Asse, that carryed barly sheafes, and (passing through the middle of them all) I escaped away, because every one deemed that I was a woman by reason I lacked a beard. Howbeit I left not off for all this, nor did degenerate

from the glory of my father, or mine own vertue, but freshly comming from the bloody skirmish, and disguised like a woman, I invaded townes and castles alone to get some pray. And therewithall he pulled out two thousand crownes, which he had under his coate, saying: Hold here the dowry which I present unto you, hold eke my person, which you shall alwayes find trusty and faithfull, if you willingly receive me: and I will ensure you that in so doing, within short space I wilt make and turne this stony house of yours into gold. Then by and by every one consented to make him their Captaine, and so they gave him better garments, and threw away his old. When they had changed his attire, hee imbraced them one after another, then placed they him in the highest roome of the table, and drunk unto him in token of good lucke.

THE TWENTY-FIFTH CHAPTER

How the death of the Asse, and the Gentlewoman was stayed.

After supper they began to talke, and declare unto him the going away of the Gentlewoman, and how I bare her upon my backe, and what death was ordained for us two. Then he desired to see her, whereupon the Gentlewoman was brought forth fast bound, whom as soone as he beheld, he turned himselfe wringing his nose, and blamed them saying: I am not so much a beast, or so rash a fellow to drive you quite from your purpose, but my conscience will not suffer me to conceale any thing that toucheth your profit, since I am as carefull for you, howbeit if my counsell doe displease you, you may at your liberty proceed in your enterprise. I doubt not but all theeves, and such as have a good judgement, will preferre their owne lucre and gain above all things in the world, and above their vengeance, which purchaseth damage to divers persons. Therefore if you put this virgin in the Asses belly, you shall but execute your indignation against her, without all manner of profit; But I would advise you to carry the virgin to some towne and to sell her: and such a brave girle as she is, may be sold for a great quantity of money. And I my selfe know certaine bawdy Marchants, amongst whom peradventure one will give us summes of gold for her. This is my opinion touching this affaure: but advise you what you intend to do, for you may rule me in this case. In this manner the good theefe pleaded and defended our cause, being a good Patron to the silly virgin, and to me poore Asse. But they staid hereupon a good space, with long deliberation, which made my heart (God wot) and spirit greatly to quaile. Howbeit in the end they consented to his opinion, and by and by the Maiden was unloosed of her bonds, who seeing the young man, and hearing the name of brothels and bawdy Merchants, began to wax joyfull, and smiled with herself. Then began I to deeme evill of the generation of women, when as I saw the Maiden (who was appointed to be married to a young Gentleman, and who so greatly desired the same) was now delighted with the talke of a wicked brothel house, and other things dishonest. In this sort the consent and manners of women depended in the judgement of an Asse.

THE TWENTY-SIXTH CHAPTER

How all the Theeves were brought asleepe by their new companion.

Then the young man spake againe, saying, Masters, why goe wee not about to make our prayers unto Mars, touching this selling of the Maiden, and to seeke for other companions. But as farre as I see, here is no other manner of beast to make sacrifice withall, nor wine sufficient for us to drinke. Let me have (quoth hee) tenne more with me, and wee will goe to the next Castle, to provide for meat and other things necessary. So he and tenne more with him, went their way: In the meane season, the residue made a great fire and an Alter with greene turfes in the honour of Mars. By and by after they came againe, bringing with them bottles of wine, and a great number of beasts, amongst which there was a big Ram Goat, fat, old, and hairy, which they killed and offered unto Mars. Then supper was prepared sumptuously, and the new companion said unto the other, You ought to accompt me not onely your Captaine in robbery and fight, but also in pleasures and jolity, whereupon by and by with pleasant cheere he prepared meat, and trimming up the house he set all things in order, and brought the pottage and dainty dishes to the Table: but above all he plyed them wel with great pots and jugs of wine. Sometimes (seeming to fetch somewhat) hee would goe to the Maiden and give her pieces of meate, which he privily tooke away, and would drinke unto her, which she willingly tooke in good part. Moreover, hee kissed her twice or thrice whereof she was well pleased but I (not well contented thereat) thought in my selfe: O wretched Maid, thou hast forgotten thy marriage, and doest esteeme this stranger and bloody theefe above thy husband which thy Parents ordained for thee, now perceive I well thou hast no remorse of conscience, but more delight to tarry and play the harlot heere amongst so many swords. What? knowest thou not how the other theeves if they knew thy demeanour would put thee to death as they had once appointed, and so worke my destruction likewise? Well now I perceive thou hast a pleasure in the dammage and hurt of other. While I did angerly devise with my selfe all these things, I perceived by certaine signes and tokens (not ignorant to so wise an Asse) that he was not the notable theefe Hemus, but rather Lepolemus her husband, for after much communication he beganne

to speake more franckly, not fearing at all my presence, and said, Be of good cheere my sweete friend Charites, for thou shalt have by and by all these thy enemies captive unto thee. Then hee filled wine to the theeves more and more, and never ceased, till as they were all overcome with abundance of meat and drinke, when as hee himselfe abstained and bridled his owne appetite. And truely I did greatly suspect, least hee had mingled in their cups some deadly poyson, for incontinently they all fell downe asleepe on the ground one after an other, and lay as though they had beene dead.

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH CHAPTER

How the Gentlewoman was carried home by her husband while the theeves were asleepe, and how much Apuleius was made of.

When the theeves were all asleepe by their great and immoderate drinking, the young man Lepolemus took the Maiden and set her upon my backe, and went homeward. When we were come home, all the people of the Citie, especially her Parents, friends, and family, came running forth joyfully, and the children and Maidens of the towne gathered together to see this virgin in great triumph sitting upon an Asse. Then I (willing to shew as much joy as I might, as present occasion served) I set and pricked up my long eares, rattled my nosethrils, and cryed stoutly, nay rather I made the towne to ring againe with my shrilling sound: when wee were come to her fathers house, shee was received in a chamber honourably: as for me, Lepolemus (accompanied with a great number of Citizens) did presently after drive me backe againe with other horses to the cave of the theeves, where wee found them all asleepe lying on the ground as wee left them; then they first brought out all the gold, and silver, and other treasure of the house, and laded us withall, which when they had done, they threw many of the theeves downe into the bottome of deepe ditches, and the residue they slew with their swords: after this wee returned home glad and merry of so great vengeance upon them, and the riches which wee carried was committed to the publike treasurie. This done, the Maid was married to Lepolemus, according to the law, whom by so much travell he had valiantly recovered: then my good Mistresse looked about for me, and asking for me commanded the very same day of her marriage, that my manger should be filled with barley, and that I should have hay and oats abundantly, and she would call me her little Camell. But how greatly did I curse Fotis, in that shee transformed me into an Asse, and not into a dogge, because I saw the dogges had filled their paunches with the reliks and bones of so worthy a supper. The next day this new wedded woman (my Mistresse) did greatly commend me before her Parents and husband, for the kindnesse which I had shewed unto her, and never leaved off untill such time as they promised to reward me with great honours. Then they called together all their friends, and thus it was concluded: one said, that I should be closed in a stable and

never worke, but continually to be fedde and fatted with fine and chosen barley and beanes and good luttour, howbeit another prevailed, who wishing my liberty, perswaded them that it was better for me to runne in the fields amongst the lascivious horses and mares, whereby I might engender some mules for my Mistresse: then he that had in charge to keepe the horse, was called for, and I was delivered unto him with great care, insomuch that I was right pleasant and joyous, because I hoped that I should carry no more fardels nor burthens, moreover I thought that when I should thus be at liberty, in the spring time of the yeere when the meddows and fields were greene, I should find some roses in some place, whereby I was fully perswaded that if my Master and Mistresse did render to me so many thanks and honours being an Asse, they would much more reward me being turned into a man: but when he (to whom the charge of me was so straightly committed) had brought me a good way distant from the City, I perceived no delicate meates nor no liberty which I should have, but by and by his covetous wife and most cursed queane made me a mill Asse, and (beating me with a cudgill full of knots) would wring bread for her selfe and her husband out of my skinne. Yet was she not contented to weary me and make me a drudge with carriage and grinding of her owne corne, but I was hired of her neighbours to beare their sakes likewise, howbeit shee would not give me such meate as I should have, nor sufficient to sustaine my life withall, for the barley which I ground for mine owne dinner she would sell to the Inhabitants by. And after that I had laboured all day, she would set before me at night a little filthy branne, nothing cleane but full of stones. Being in this calamity, yet fortune worked me other torments, for on a day I was let loose into the fields to pasture, by the commandement of my master. O how I leaped for joy, how I neighed to see my selfe in such liberty, but especially since I beheld so many Mares, which I thought should be my wives and concubines; and I espied out and chose the fairest before I came nigh them; but this my joyfull hope turned into otter destruction, for incontinently all the stone Horses which were well fedde and made strong by ease of pasture, and thereby much more puissant then a poore Asse, were jealous over me, and (having no regard to the law and order of God Jupiter) ranne fiercely and terribly against me; one lifted up his forefeete and kicked me spitefully, another turned himselfe, and with his hinder heeles spurned me cruelly, the third threatning with a malicious

neighing, dressed his eares and shewing his sharpe and white teeth bit me on every side. In like sort have I read in Histories how the King of Thrace would throw his miserable ghests to be torne in peeces and devoured of his wild Horses, so niggish was that Tyrant of his provender, that he nourished them with the bodies of men.

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH CHAPTER

How Apuleius was made a common Ass to fetch home wood, and how he was handled by a boy.

After that I was thus handled by horses, I was brought home againe to the Mill, but behold fortune (insatiable of my torments) had devised a new paine for me. I was appointed to bring home wood every day from a high hill, and who should drive me thither and home again, but a boy that was the veriest hangman in all the world, who was not contented with the great travell that I tooke in climbing up the hill, neither pleased when he saw my hoofe torne and worne away by sharpe flintes, but he beat me cruelly with a great staffe, insomuch that the marrow of my bones did ake for woe, for he would strike me continually on the right hip, and still in one place, whereby he tore my skinne and made of my wide sore a great hole or trench, or rather a window to looke out at, and although it runne downe of blood, yet would he not cease beating me in that place: moreover he laded me with such great burthens of wood that you would thinke they had been rather prepared for Elephants then for me, and when he perceived that my wood hanged more on one side then another, (when he should rather take away the heavy sides, and so ease me, or else lift them up to make them equall with the other) he laid great stones upon the weaker side to remedy the matter, yet could be not be contented with this my great misery and immoderate burthens of wood, but when hee came to any river (as there were many by the way) he to save his feete from water, would leape upon my loynes likewise, which was no small loade upon loade. And if by adversity I had fell downe in any dirty or myrie place, when he should have pulled me out either with ropes, or lifted me up by the taile, he would never helpe me, but lay me on from top to toe with a mighty staffe, till he had left no haire on all my body, no not so much as on mine eares, whereby I was compelled by force of blowes to stand up. The same hangman boy did invent another torment for me: he gathered a great many sharp thornes as sharp as needles and bound them together like a fagot, and tyed them at my tayle to pricke me, then was I afflicted on every side, for if I had indeavoured to runne away, the thornes would have pricked me, if I had stood still, the boy would have beaten mee, and yet the boy beate mee to make me runne, whereby I

perceived that the hangman did devise nothing else save only to kill me by some manner of meanes, and he would sweare and threaten to do me worse harme, and because hee might have some occasion to execute his malicious minde, upon a day (after that I had endeavoured too much by my patience) I lifted up my heeles and spurned him welfavouredly. Then he invented this vengeance against me, after that he had well laded me with shrubs and rubble, and trussed it round upon my backe, hee brought me out into the way: then hee stole a burning coale out of a mans house of the next village, and put it into the middle of the rubbell; the rubbell and shrubs being very dry, did fall on a light fire and burned me on every side. I could see no remedy how I might save my selfe, and in such a case it was not best for me to stand still but fortune was favourable towards me, perhaps to reserve me for more dangers, for I espyed a great hole full of raine water that fell the day before, thither I ranne hastily and plunged my selfe therein, in such sort that I quenched the fire, and was delivered from that present perill, but the vile boy to excuse himselfe declared to all the neighbours and shepheards about, that I willingly tumbled in the fire as I passed through the village. Then he laughed upon me saying: How long shall we nourish and keepe this fiery Asse in vaine?

THE TWENTY-NINTH CHAPTER

How Apuleius was accused of Lechery by the boy.

A few dayes after, the boy invented another mischief: For when he had sold all the wood which I bare, to certaine men dwelling in a village by, he lead me homeward unladen: And then he cryed that he was not able to rule me, and that hee would not drive mee any longer to the hill for wood, saying: Doe you not see this slow and dulle Asse, who besides all the mischiefes that he hath wrought already, inventeth daily more and more. For he espyeth any woman passing by the way, whether she be old or marryed, or if it be a young child, hee will throw his burthen from his backe, and runneth fiercely upon them. And after that he hath thrown them downe, he will stride over them to commit his buggery and beastly pleasure, moreover hee will faine as though hee would kisse them, but he will bite their faces cruelly, which thing may worke us great displeasure, or rather to be imputed unto us as a crime: and even now when he espyed an honest maiden passing by die high way, he by and by threw downe his wood and runne after her: And when he had throwne her down upon the ground, he would have ravished her before the face of all the world, had it not beene that by reason of her crying out, she was succored and pulled from his heeles, and so delivered. And if it had so come to passe that this fearefull maid had beene slaine by him, what danger had we beene in? By these and like lies, he provoked the shepherds earnestly against me, which grieved mee (God wot) full sore that said nothing. Then one of the shepherds said: Why doe we not make sacrifice of this common adulterous Asse? My sonne (quoth he) let us kill him and throw his guts to the dogges, and reserve his flesh for the labourers supper. Then let us cast dust upon his skinne, and carry it home to our master, and say that the Woolves have devoured him. The boy that was my evill accuser made no delay, but prepared himselfe to execute the sentence of the shepherd, rejoycing at my present danger, but O how greatly did I then repent that the stripe which I gave him with my heele had not killed him. Then he drew out his sword and made it sharp upon the whetstone to slay me, but another of the shepherds gan say, Verely it is a great offence to kill so faire an Asse, and so (by accusation of luxurie and lascivious wantonnesse) to lack so necessarie his labour and service, where

otherwise if ye would cut off his stones, he might not onely be deprived of his courage but also become gentle, that we should be delivered from all feare and danger. Moreover he would be thereby more fat and better in flesh. For I know my selfe as well many Asses, as also most fierce horses, that by reason of their wantonnesse have beene most mad and terrible, but (when they were gelded and cut) they have become gentle and tame, and tractable to all use. Wherefore I would counsell you to geld him. And if you consent thereto, I will by and by, when I go to the next market fetch mine irons and tooles for the purpose: And I ensure you after that I have gelded and cut off his stones, I will deliver him unto you as tame as a lambe. When I did perceive that I was delivered from death, and reserved to be gelded, I was greatly sorrie, insomuch that I thought all the hinder part of my body and my stones did ake for woe, but I sought about to kill my selfe by some manner of meanes, to the end if I should die, I would die with unperished members.

THE THIRTIETH CHAPTER

How the boy that lead Apuleius to the field, was slaine in the wood.

While I devised with my selfe in what manner I might end my life, the roperipe boy on the next morrow lead me to the same hill againe, and tied me to a bow of a great Oke, and in the meane season he tooke his hatchet and cut wood to load me withall, but behold there crept out of a cave by, a marvailous great Beare, holding out his mighty head, whom when I saw, I was sodainly stroken in feare, and (throwing all the strength of my body into my hinder heeles) lifted up my strained head and brake the halter, wherewith I was tied. Then there was no need to bid me runne away, for I scoured not only on foot, but tumbled over the stones and rocks with my body till I came into the open fields, to the intent I would escape from the terrible Beare, but especially from the boy that was worse than the Beare. Then a certaine stranger that passed by the way (espying me alone as a stray Asse) tooke me up and roade upon my backe, beating me with a staffe (which he bare in his hand) through a wide and unknowne lane, whereat I was nothing displeased, but willingly went forward to avoid the cruell paine of gelding, which the shepherds had ordained for me, but as for the stripes I was nothing moved, since I was accustomed to be beaten so every day. But evill fortune would not suffer me to continue in so good estate long: For the shepherds looking about for a Cow that they had lost (after they had sought in divers places) fortun'd to come upon us unwares, who when they espied and knew me, they would have taken me by the halter, but he that rode upon my backe resisted them saying, O Lord masters, what intend you to do? Will you rob me? Then said the shepherds, What? thinkest thou we handle thee otherwise then thou deservest, which hast stollen away our Asse? Why dost thou not rather tell us where thou hast hidden the boy whom thou hast slaine? And therewithall they pulled him downe to the ground, beating him with their fists, and spurning him with their feete. Then he answered unto them saying, titathat he saw no manner of boy, but onely found the Asse loose and straying abroad, which he tooke up to the intent to have some reward for the finding of him and to restore him againe to his Master. And I would to God (quoth he) that this Asse (which verely was never seene)

could speake as a man to give witnesse of mine innocency: Then would you be ashamed of the injury which you have done to me. Thus (reasoning for Himselfe) he nothing prevailed, for they tied the halter about my necke, and (maugre his face) pulled me quite away, and lead me backe againe through the woods of the hill to the place where the boy accustomed to resort. And after they could find him in no place, at length they found his body rent and torne in peeces, and his members dispersed in sundry places, which I well knew was done by the cruell Beare: and verely I would have told it if I might have spoken, but (which I could onely do) I greatly rejoiced at his death, although it came too late. Then they gathered together the peeces of his body and buried them. By and by they laid the fault to my new Master, that tooke me up by the way, and (bringing him home fast bound to their houses) purposed on the next morrow to accuse him of murther, and to lead him before the Justices to have judgement of death.

THE THIRTY-FIRST CHAPTER

How Apuleius was cruelly beaten by the Mother of the boy that was slaine.

In the meane season, while the Parents of the boy did lament and weepe for the death of their sonne, the shepheard (according to his promise) came with his instruments and tooles to geld me. Then one of them said, Tush we little esteeme the mischiefe he did yesterday, but now we are contented that to morrow his stones shall not onely be cut off, but also his head. So was it brought to passe, that my death was delayed till the next morrow, but what thanks did I give to that good boy, who (being so slaine) was the cause of my pardon for one short day. Howbeit I had no time then to rest my selfe, for the Mother of the boy, weeping and lamenting for his death, attired in mourning vesture, tare her haire and beat her breast, and came presently into the stable, saying, Is it reason that this carelesse beast should do nothing all day but hold his head in the manger, filling and belling his guts with meat without compassion of my great miserie, or remembrance of the pittiful death of his slaine Master: and contemning my age and infirmity, thinketh that I am unable to revenge his mischiefs, moreover he would perswade me, that he were not culpable. Indeed, it is a convenient thing to looke and plead for safety, when as the conscience doeth confesse the offence, as theeves and malefactors accustome to do. But O good Lord, thou cursed beast, if thou couldest utter the contents of thine owne mind, whom (though it were the veriest foole in all the world) mightest thou perswade that this murther was voide or without thy fault, when as it lay in thy power, either to keepe off the theeves with thy heeles, or else to bite and teare them with thy teeth? Couldst not thou (that so often in his life time diddest spurne and kicke him) defend him now at the point of death by the like meane? Yet at least, thou shouldest have taken him upon thy backe, and so brought him from the cruell hands of the theeves: where contrary thou runnest away alone, forsaking thy good Master, thy pastor and conductor. Knowest thou not, that such as denie their wholsome help and aid to them which lie in danger of death, ought to be punished, because they have offended against good manners, and the law naturall? But I promise thee, thou shalt not long rejoyce at my harmes, thou shalt feele the smart of thy homicide and offence, I will see what I can

doe. And therewithall she unclosed her apron, and bound all my feete together, to the end I might not help my selfe, then she tooke a great barre, which accustomed to bar the stable doore, and never ceased beating me till she was so weary that the bar fell out of her hands, whereupon she (complaining of the soone faintnesse of her armes) ran to her fire and brought a firebrand and thrust it under my taile, burning me continually, till such time as (having but one remedy) I arayed her face and eies with my durty dunge, whereby (what with the stinke thereof, and what with the filthinesse that fell in her eies) she was welnigh blinded: so I enforced the queane to leave off, otherwise I had died as Meleager did by the sticke, which his mad mother Althea cast into the fire.

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