

第五章

Chapter 5



导

读

奥斯瓦尔德回来后，低声告诉主人来客是个自称“约克城^①的伊萨克”的犹太人，询问是否应该带他进来。艾默尔院长和圣殿骑士布莱恩很蔑视犹太人，因而都表示反对，但塞德里克说无论如何不能不招待别人。

伊萨克进来了，他是个瘦高清俊的老人，有着明显的犹太人的面部特征，衣服已经被雨淋透了。犹太人当时普遍被人们厌弃，伊萨克来到餐厅门口摘下帽子向房间里的人表示敬意时，塞德里克只冷冷地点了点头。他羞涩地挨着条案走过去，没有人让座给他，大家都继续大吃大喝，毫不理睬，而布莱恩带来的阿拉伯教徒们甚至表现出愤怒。

看到伊萨克受着众人的白眼和漠视，那个坐在壁炉旁边的游方修士起了恻隐之心，他让出自己的座位，招呼伊萨克过去烤烤火，又从饭桌上盛了些浓汤和羊肉给他，没等他说谢谢，就走到大厅另一边去了。犹太人一边烤着火，一边拿起热腾腾的饭菜大吃起来，仿佛很久没吃东西了。

艾默尔院长兴高采烈地谈论着他最感兴趣的狩猎话题，说是若谈论起这类话题，用诺曼-法兰西语才是最恰当绝妙的，而塞德里克说自己并不需要那些精巧辞令，并说无论正在巴勒斯坦作战的十字军人们说什么语言，都该为他们祝福干杯。布莱恩和艾默尔却说只有法国人建立的圣殿骑士团和圣约翰骑士团^②才当得起称赞，这让罗维娜不满地质询是否英吉利人的

① 约克城：约克，英格兰东北部城市，为北约克郡首府。

② 圣约翰骑士团：成立于第一次十字军东征之后，为法国贵族设立，是为在耶路撒冷保护其医护设施而设立的军事组织。

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伊萨克

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队伍不能相提并论，圣殿骑士自负地说比起骑士团来他们还是次一些。不料那个游方修士坚决反驳说英吉利人绝不次于任何人，在擂台上完全可以把圣殿骑士们打倒在地。

布莱恩听到后怒不可遏，而塞德里克听到本国人有此种丰功伟绩后欣喜若狂，说是若游方修士能告诉自己那些英勇的英格兰骑士都是谁，就把一个金镫子送给他。游方修士拒绝了他的报酬，但乐意告诉塞德里克那些骑士的名字。他说，第一名是国王理查，第二名是莱赛斯特伯爵，第三名是托马斯·穆尔顿爵士，第四名是佛尔克·道利爵士，第五名是埃德温·特纳汉爵士，这些名字都让塞德里克很兴奋。但在说第六名时，游方修士犹豫了一下，最后说只是个用来充数的并不著名、级位很低的青年骑士，名字也记不得了。布莱恩则替他说出了这个名字——艾凡赫骑士，说他的武艺极为高强，但自己曾在擂台赛上败给他是因为不走运，在本期比武竞赛上一定还要和他一比高下。游方修士认真地说，他保证若是艾凡赫从巴勒斯坦回来，一定会应战的，同时拿出一个装有十字架的圣物盒做担保。圣殿骑士也从脖子上取下一条金项链作保，请艾默尔作证，若艾凡赫到时不接受自己的挑战，就要向全欧洲公布他是个懦夫。罗维娜表示也要用自己的名字和声誉为艾凡赫担保。

塞德里克的家人们听到第六个骑士的名字后都非常紧张地看着主人。塞德里克很矛盾，又得意又烦恼，但他也愿意用自己的荣誉担保艾凡赫的荣誉。不喜欢纷争的艾默尔把圣物盒和金项链都收藏起来，谢绝主人的挽留，坚决要求退席休息。于是每个人干了最后一杯酒，有秩序地退去，回到各自下榻的屋里。在路上，圣殿骑士还不忘讽刺了一下伊萨克，说他们犹太人都贪婪狡诈，伊萨克被他的威严吓得不能不轻。

Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is?

MERCHANT OF VENICE

Oswald, returning, whispered into the ear of his master, "It is a Jew, who calls himself Isaac of York; is it fit I should marshal him into the hall?"

“Let Gurth do thine office, Oswald,” said Wamba with his usual effrontery; “the swineherd will be a fit usher to the Jew.”

“St Mary,” said the Abbot, crossing himself, “an unbelieving Jew, and admitted into this presence!”

“A dog Jew,” echoed the Templar, “to approach a defender of the Holy Sepulchre?”

“By my faith,” said Wamba, “it would seem the Templars love the Jews’ inheritance better than they do their company.”

“Peace, my worthy guests,” said Cedric; “my hospitality must not be bounded by your dislikes. If Heaven bore with the whole nation of stiff-necked unbelievers for more years than a layman can number, we may endure the presence of one Jew for a few hours. But I constrain no man to converse or to feed with him. — Let him have a board and a morsel apart, — unless,” he said smiling, “these turban’d strangers will admit his society.”

“Sir Franklin,” answered the Templar, “my Saracen slaves are true Moslems, and scorn as much as any Christian to hold intercourse with a Jew.”

“Now, in faith,” said Wamba, “I cannot see that the worshippers of Mahound and Termagaunt have so greatly the advantage over the people once chosen of Heaven.”

“He shall sit with thee, Wamba,” said Cedric; “the fool and the knave will be well met.”

“The fool,” answered Wamba, raising the relics of a gammon of bacon, “will take care to erect a bulwark against the knave.”

“Hush,” said Cedric, “for here he comes.”

Introduced with little ceremony, and advancing with fear and hesitation, and many a bow of deep humility, a tall thin old man, who, however, had lost by the habit of stooping much of his actual height, approached the lower end of the board. His features, keen and regular, with an aquiline nose, and piercing black eyes; his high and wrinkled forehead, and long grey hair and beard, would have been considered as handsome, had they not been the marks of a physiognomy peculiar to a race, which, during those dark ages, was alike detested by the credulous and prejudiced vulgar, and persecuted by the greedy and rapacious nobility, and who, perhaps, owing to that very hatred and

persecution, had adopted a national character, in which there was much, to say the least, mean and unamiable.

The Jew's dress, which appeared to have suffered considerably from the storm, was a plain russet cloak of many folds, covering a dark purple tunic. He had large boots lined with fur, and a belt around his waist, which sustained a small knife, together with a case for writing materials, but no weapon. He wore a high square yellow cap of a peculiar fashion, assigned to his nation to distinguish them from Christians, and which he doffed with great humility at the door of the hall.

The reception of this person in the hall of Cedric the Saxon, was such as might have satisfied the most prejudiced enemy of the tribes of Israel. Cedric himself coldly nodded in answer to the Jew's repeated salutations, and signed to him to take place at the lower end of the table, where, however, no one offered to make room for him. On the contrary, as he passed along the file, casting a timid supplicating glance, and turning towards each of those who occupied the lower end of the board, the Saxon domestics squared their shoulders, and continued to devour their supper with great perseverance, paying not the least attention to the wants of the new guest. The attendants of the Abbot crossed themselves, with looks of pious horror, and the very heathen Saracens, as Isaac drew near them, curled up their whiskers with indignation, and laid their hands on their poniards, as if ready to rid themselves by the most desperate means from the apprehended contamination of his nearer approach.

Probably the same motives which induced Cedric to open his hall to this son of a rejected people, would have made him insist on his attendants receiving Isaac with more courtesy. But the Abbot had, at this moment, engaged him in a most interesting discussion on the breed and character of his favourite hounds, which he would not have interrupted for matters of much greater importance than that of a Jew going to bed supperless. While Isaac thus stood an outcast in the present society, like his people among the nations, looking in vain for welcome or resting place, the pilgrim who sat by the chimney took compassion upon him, and resigned his seat, saying briefly, "Old man, my garments are dried, my hunger is appeased, thou art both wet and fasting." So saying, he gathered together, and brought to a flame, the decaying

brands which lay scattered on the ample hearth; took from the larger board a mess of pottage and seethed kid, placed it upon the small table at which he had himself supped, and, without waiting the Jew's thanks, went to the other side of the hall; — whether from unwillingness to hold more close communication with the object of his benevolence, or from a wish to draw near to the upper end of the table, seemed uncertain.

Had there been painters in those days capable to execute such a subject, the Jew, as he bent his withered form, and expanded his chilled and trembling hands over the fire, would have formed no bad emblematical personification of the Winter season. Having dispelled the cold, he turned eagerly to the smoking mess which was placed before him, and ate with a haste and an apparent relish, that seemed to betoken long abstinence from food.

Meanwhile the Abbot and Cedric continued their discourse upon hunting; the Lady Rowena seemed engaged in conversation with one of her attendant females; and the haughty Templar, whose eye wandered from the Jew to the Saxon beauty, revolved in his mind thoughts which appeared deeply to interest him.

“I marvel, worthy Cedric,” said the Abbot, as their discourse proceeded, “that, great as your predilection is for your own manly language, you do not receive the Norman-French into your favour, so far at least as the mystery of wood-craft and hunting is concerned. Surely no tongue is so rich in the various phrases which the field-sports demand, or furnishes means to the experienced woodman so well to express his jovial art.”

“Good Father Aymer,” said the Saxon, “be it known to you, I care not for those over-sea refinements, without which I can well enough take my pleasure in the woods. I can wind my horn, though I call not the blast either a *recheate* or a *morte* — I can cheer my dogs on the prey, and I can flay and quarter the animal when it is brought down, without using the newfangled jargon of *curee*, *arbor*, *nombles*, and all the babble of the fabulous Sir Tristrem.”

“The French,” said the Templar, raising his voice with the presumptuous and authoritative tone which he used upon all occasions, “is not only the natural language of the chase, but that of love and of war, in which ladies should be won and enemies defied.”

“Pledge me in a cup of wine, Sir Templar,” said Cedric, “and fill another to the Abbot, while I look back some thirty years to tell you another tale. As Cedric the Saxon then was, his plain English tale needed no garnish from French troubadours, when it was told in the ear of beauty; and the field of Northallerton, upon the day of the Holy Standard, could tell whether the Saxon war-cry was not heard as far within the ranks of the Scottish host as the *cri de guerre* of the boldest Norman baron. To the memory of the brave who fought there! — Pledge me, my guests.” He drank deep, and went on with increasing warmth. “Ay, that was a day of cleaving of shields, when a hundred banners were bent forwards over the heads of the valiant, and blood flowed round like water, and death was held better than flight. A Saxon bard had called it a feast of the swords — a gathering of the eagles to the prey — the clashing of bills upon shield and helmet, the shouting of battle more joyful than the clamour of a bridal. But our bards are no more,” he said; “our deeds are lost in those of another race — our language — our very name — is hastening to decay, and none mourns for it save one solitary old man — Cupbearer! knave, fill the goblets — To the strong in arms, Sir Templar, be their race or language what it will, who now bear them best in Palestine among the champions of the Cross!”

“It becomes not one wearing this badge to answer,” said Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert; “yet to whom, besides the sworn Champions of the Holy Sepulchre, can the palm be assigned among the champions of the Cross?”

“To the Knights Hospitallers,” said the Abbot; “I have a brother of their order.”

“I impeach not their fame,” said the Templar; “nevertheless — ”

“I think, friend Cedric,” said Wamba, interfering, “that had Richard of the Lion’s Heart been wise enough to have taken a fool’s advice, he might have staid at home with his merry Englishmen, and left the recovery of Jerusalem to those same Knights who had most to do with the loss of it.”

“Were there, then, none in the English army,” said the Lady Rowena, “whose names are worthy to be mentioned with the Knights of the Temple, and of St John?”

“Forgive me, lady,” replied De Bois-Guilbert; “the English monarch did, indeed, bring to Palestine a host of gallant warriors, second only to those whose

breasts have been the unceasing bulwark of that blessed land.”

“Second to NONE,” said the Pilgrim, who had stood near enough to hear, and had listened to this conversation with marked impatience. All turned toward the spot from whence this unexpected asseveration was heard.

“I say,” repeated the Pilgrim in a firm and strong voice, “that the English chivalry were second to NONE who ever drew sword in defence of the Holy Land. I say besides, for I saw it, that King Richard himself, and five of his knights, held a tournament after the taking of St John-de-Acre, as challengers against all comers. I say that, on that day, each knight ran three courses, and cast to the ground three antagonists. I add, that seven of these assailants were Knights of the Temple — and Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert well knows the truth of what I tell you.”

It is impossible for language to describe the bitter scowl of rage which rendered yet darker the swarthy countenance of the Templar. In the extremity of his resentment and confusion, his quivering fingers griped towards the handle of his sword, and perhaps only withdrew, from the consciousness that no act of violence could be safely executed in that place and presence. Cedric, whose feelings were all of a right onward and simple kind, and were seldom occupied by more than one object at once, omitted, in the joyous glee with which he heard of the glory of his countrymen, to remark the angry confusion of his guest; “I would give thee this golden bracelet, Pilgrim,” he said, “couldst thou tell me the names of those knights who upheld so gallantly the renown of merry England.”

“That will I do blithely,” replied the Pilgrim, “and without guerdon; my oath, for a time, prohibits me from touching gold.”

“I will wear the bracelet for you, if you will, friend Palmer,” said Wamba.

“The first in honour as in arms, in renown as in place,” said the Pilgrim, “was the brave Richard, King of England.”

“I forgive him,” said Cedric; “I forgive him his descent from the tyrant Duke William.”

“The Earl of Leicester was the second,” continued the Pilgrim; “Sir Thomas Multon of Gilsland was the third.”

“Of Saxon descent, he at least,” said Cedric, with exultation.

“Sir Foulk Doilly the fourth,” proceeded the Pilgrim.

“Saxon also, at least by the mother’s side,” continued Cedric, who listened with the utmost eagerness, and forgot, in part at least, his hatred to the Normans, in the common triumph of the King of England and his islanders. “And who was the fifth?” he demanded.

“The fifth was Sir Edwin Turneham.”

“Genuine Saxon, by the soul of Hengist!” shouted Cedric — “And the sixth?” he continued with eagerness — “how name you the sixth?”

“The sixth,” said the Palmer, after a pause, in which he seemed to recollect himself, “was a young knight of lesser renown and lower rank, assumed into that honourable company, less to aid their enterprise than to make up their number — his name dwells not in my memory.”

“Sir Palmer,” said Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert scornfully, “this assumed forgetfulness, after so much has been remembered, comes too late to serve your purpose. I will myself tell the name of the knight before whose lance fortune and my horse’s fault occasioned my falling — it was the Knight of Ivanhoe; nor was there one of the six that, for his years, had more renown in arms. — Yet this will I say, and loudly — that were he in England, and durst repeat, in this week’s tournament, the challenge of St John-de-Acre, I, mounted and armed as I now am, would give him every advantage of weapons, and abide the result.”

“Your challenge would soon be answered,” replied the Palmer, “were your antagonist near you. As the matter is, disturb not the peaceful hall with vaunts of the issue of the conflict, which you well know cannot take place. If Ivanhoe ever returns from Palestine, I will be his surety that he meets you.”

“A godly security!” said the Knight Templar; “and what do you proffer as a pledge?”

“This reliquary,” said the Palmer, taking a small ivory box from his bosom, and crossing himself, “containing a portion of the true cross, brought from the Monastery of Mount Carmel.”

The Prior of Jorvaulx crossed himself and repeated a pater noster, in which all devoutly joined, excepting the Jew, the Mahomedans, and the Templar; the latter of whom, without vailing his bonnet, or testifying any reverence for the

alleged sanctity of the relic, took from his neck a gold chain, which he flung on the board, saying — “Let Prior Aymer hold my pledge and that of this nameless vagrant, in token that when the Knight of Ivanhoe comes within the four seas of Britain, he underlies the challenge of Brian de Bois-Guilbert, which, if he answer not, I will proclaim him as a coward on the walls of every Temple Court in Europe.”

“It will not need,” said the Lady Rowena, breaking silence; “My voice shall be heard, if no other in this hall is raised in behalf of the absent Ivanhoe. I affirm he will meet fairly every honourable challenge. Could my weak warrant add security to the inestimable pledge of this holy pilgrim, I would pledge name and fame that Ivanhoe gives this proud knight the meeting he desires.”

A crowd of conflicting emotions seemed to have occupied Cedric, and kept him silent during this discussion. Gratified pride, resentment, embarrassment, chased each other over his broad and open brow, like the shadow of clouds drifting over a harvest-field; while his attendants, on whom the name of the sixth knight seemed to produce an effect almost electrical, hung in suspense upon their master’s looks. But when Rowena spoke, the sound of her voice seemed to startle him from his silence.

“Lady,” said Cedric, “this beseems not; were further pledge necessary, I myself, offended, and justly offended, as I am, would yet gage my honour for the honour of Ivanhoe. But the wager of battle is complete, even according to the fantastic fashions of Norman chivalry — Is it not, Father Aymer?”

“It is,” replied the Prior; “and the blessed relic and rich chain will I bestow safely in the treasury of our convent, until the decision of this warlike challenge.”

Having thus spoken, he crossed himself again and again, and after many genuflections and muttered prayers, he delivered the reliquary to Brother Ambrose, his attendant monk, while he himself swept up with less ceremony, but perhaps with no less internal satisfaction, the golden chain, and bestowed it in a pouch lined with perfumed leather, which opened under his arm. “And now, Sir Cedric,” he said, “my ears are chiming vespers with the strength of your good wine — permit us another pledge to the welfare of the Lady Rowena, and indulge us with liberty to pass to our repose.”

“By the rood of Bromholme,” said the Saxon, “you do but small credit to your fame, Sir Prior! Report speaks you a bonny monk, that would hear the matin chime ere he quitted his bowl; and, old as I am, I feared to have shame in encountering you. But, by my faith, a Saxon boy of twelve, in my time, would not so soon have relinquished his goblet.”

The Prior had his own reasons, however, for persevering in the course of temperance which he had adopted. He was not only a professional peacemaker, but from practice a hater of all feuds and brawls. It was not altogether from a love to his neighbour, or to himself, or from a mixture of both. On the present occasion, he had an instinctive apprehension of the fiery temper of the Saxon, and saw the danger that the reckless and presumptuous spirit, of which his companion had already given so many proofs, might at length produce some disagreeable explosion. He therefore gently insinuated the incapacity of the native of any other country to engage in the genial conflict of the bowl with the hardy and strong-headed Saxons; something he mentioned, but slightly, about his own holy character, and ended by pressing his proposal to depart to repose.

The grace-cup was accordingly served round, and the guests, after making deep obeisance to their landlord and to the Lady Rowena, arose and mingled in the hall, while the heads of the family, by separate doors, retired with their attendants.

“Unbelieving dog,” said the Templar to Isaac the Jew, as he passed him in the throng, “dost thou bend thy course to the tournament?”

“I do so propose,” replied Isaac, bowing in all humility, “if it please your reverend valour.”

“Ay,” said the Knight, “to gnaw the bowels of our nobles with usury, and to gull women and boys with gauds and toys — I warrant thee store of shekels in thy Jewish scrip.”

“Not a shekel, not a silver penny, not a halfling — so help me the God of Abraham!” said the Jew, clasping his hands; “I go but to seek the assistance of some brethren of my tribe to aid me to pay the fine which the Exchequer of the Jews have imposed upon me — Father Jacob be my speed! I am an impoverished wretch — the very gaberdine I wear is borrowed from Reuben of Tadcaster.”

The Templar smiled sourly as he replied, "Beshrew thee for a false-hearted liar!" and passing onward, as if disdainful of farther conference, he communed with his Moslem slaves in a language unknown to the bystanders. The poor Israelite seemed so staggered by the address of the military monk, that the Templar had passed on to the extremity of the hall ere he raised his head from the humble posture which he had assumed, so far as to be sensible of his departure. And when he did look around, it was with the astonished air of one at whose feet a thunderbolt has just burst, and who hears still the astounding report ringing in his ears.

The Templar and Prior were shortly after marshalled to their sleeping apartments by the steward and the cupbearer, each attended by two torchbearers and two servants carrying refreshments, while servants of inferior condition indicated to their retinue and to the other guests their respective places of repose.