

The Prince

On the muggy streets of post-industrial England, golden tickets were rare for the unemployed who sat shamefully on the sides of the roads in slums begging for money in foolish hopes that a plump man may give one away- one singular coin. Those members of high society were not ones for alms, yet perhaps they had a thing for Almir, who was one day given that blessing. Maybe it was a trick of the light, making his watery eyes glisten- deeming him deserving in the rich man's eyes. And further so, perhaps that same trick of the light that made the penny handed to him seem golden in godly glory rather than the bronze pity it was. Since he first lost his job, Almir had not seen a shiny object save for the metal glint of the factories in the moonlight that he so observed as he visited Coventina's well that night. The well was his secret- his only "possession." Thus, he threw that penny of golden potential into the well, hopeful of a better life. Yet, as he watched his opportunity ticket sink into the depths of the well, so too did a pit into his stomach.

"Idiot." He cursed out loud to himself.

His opportunity was sinking in front of him- an opportunity at real food he would have managed to sell for more. However, as he watched it sink, he dared not to pick it up. He was already a cursed man and saw no value in dooming himself further by fishing the coin out and thus sully the sacred well that, for so long, people had made offerings to the goddess Coventina. The world may have turned against once-farmers like himself, so he was determined not to let god do the same. He peered back into the well as if he would find his lost opportunity in the dark depths and couldn't help but ponder, as a poor man often did, how easy it would be to steal. Yet he repeated to himself that:

*The well is faith,
A belief in humanity.
That no one will steal
with such vanity.*

Almir chanted, seating himself under a tree for the night only to be interrupted by a ripple in the water, which sent identical waves through his brain. Something was wrong- or perhaps, he foolishly thought, the gods were sending him a signal. He squinted to see a plump man fishing coins out of Coventina's well.

*I must be mistaken,
Imagining this break in- for
The well is faith-
A belief in humanity.
That no one will steal
with such vanity.*

Though taken at first by rage, Almir did not elicit a response. He very well understood how fragile that belief in humanity was. He watched the plump man for a while and could only pity. Though penniless, Almir¹ felt he had lived up to his name.

¹ Almir is a muslim boy name meaning "prince"

The Reichmann

On the muggy streets of post-industrial England, golden tickets were rare for the unemployed who sat shamefully on the sides of the roads in slums begging for money. Reichmann was in high emotion- frustrated with his business' stunted growth. The factory workers kept going on strike, and he was losing money. Though, he had too much to ever end up like the man he saw in front of him. Unlike the other beggars, the man didn't utter a word to bother him, for if he did, Reichmann might have exploded. He took a penny out of his pocket and tossed it onto the ground with disregard. He knew coins would be his golden ticket, but a regular penny wouldn't suffice. Frustrated at the penny for not being gold, he did not even mind he had given unemployed money because that bronze pity would be all the poor man got for a week.

Reichmann hated filth. There was no reason for him to be in the slums save for one reason. One resource that would give him his golden ticket to even more riches- the fabled well. It is said to be located near the steel factory in the particular slum he was in. He chuckled to himself at the irony of the situation. Many peasants who've laid at his feet probably knew about it but never understood its value. Reichman hated filth, yet he went to the factory under darkness that night. It amazed him how the shine of something can change how it looks. The steel factory that obtruded the morning landscape in a way too harsh for his eye became a beautiful marvel that moonlight reflected off of during the night.

Going along the perimeter of this newfound beauty, he spotted a clearing in the middle of which the well sat. Reichmann glanced down into it and saw nothing. Though he wanted to believe this was because of the dark, he thought deep down that someone more corrupt than he may have already stolen all the well's contents. Surrounded by businessmen, he had little faith in humanity, and rightfully so. Gathering up some belief, he reached his hand down into the water. This would save his business, as a coin valuable enough could be sold for hundreds.

"Idiot," he whisper-yelled at the water.

The well water was freezing, but Reichmann wasn't surprised- the world was often cold to him. Deferring his anger at the well, he fished for coins until finally pulling one of substantial weight out. Looking at the markings, he nearly screamed in excitement. He had found a Roman Denarius (worth 11M on the market). Yet he couldn't understand what such a rare and foreign coin would be doing in England. Looking around the well for clues, he found words etched onto the top of the well. He could not, however, read the ancient language it was in, but could pick up on bits and pieces. There were four lines, and the structure resembled some song or poem. The only word he did understand was Coventina- a Roman goddess. Immediately regretting his decision to steal, a new fear was instilled in him of upsetting a goddess. He soon brushed it away, though. *I'm going to be the biggest businessman in all of England. No one can do anything to stop me, whether that be a common person or a goddess.* After all, Reichmann wasn't a believer in high faith, despite the slight fear that some forces might prove otherwise. In any case, it's pertinent to know he hated filth. By placing the coin in his pocket, little did he know he would wake up daily hating the filth he emitted. Every day, even as he profited significantly and rose to

Coins of Coventina

be the businessman he said he would, Reichmann felt even poorer than the peasants he pretended to be merciful towards on the street.

So goes this Coventina about the disparities between the rich and poor and the value a single coin can have to both socio-economic subdivisions.