

# Charles Martin Felix

MARTIN. Be grateful you're covered for the cow. Come on. *(He lifts her up and walks her briskly out.)*  
PEASANT WOMAN. But you stopped me in the middle ...  
MARTIN. Then come back tomorrow, we may still be here. *(They have disappeared through the doorway. Off.)* And bring your penny with you! *(A door slams. Pause.)*  
OLF. May I speak now?  
CHARLES. Hmm? Certainly. *(Martin enters; Olf eyes him.)*  
OLF. I didn't want to interrupt.  
MARTIN. Brother Olf had one of his questions.  
CHARLES. What is it?  
OLF. I need to know where to put this.  
CHARLES. *(For the hundred and first time.)* If it's barley, it goes in the alehouse, if it's miller —  
OLF. It's a Jew.  
MARTIN. *(Beat.)* A Jew?  
OLF. Moneychanger. I found him in the mud by the road outside the village.  
CHARLES. Found him ... you mean dead?  
OLF. He'd been hit on the head with a rock and robbed of all but his tunic.  
MARTIN. Murdered?  
OLF. He's missing a finger, too — cut off for the ring, no doubt.  
CHARLES. Good lord ... what desperate times we live in. I suppose we should take the body to Paris — let the synagogue bury him.  
OLF. Paris?  
CHARLES. There isn't one closer.  
OLF. But he's already dead three days, at least. And in this heat ...  
MARTIN. Well, what would you have us do, then? Give him a good Christian burial?  
CHARLES. If there's nowhere else to bury him, we'll bury him here ...  
MARTIN. Wonderful. Perfect! I can see it now: his Holiness arriving as we drop a Jew into consecrated ground.  
CHARLES. I hadn't thought of that.  
MARTIN. It might be misconstrued. *(Charles considers the dilemma for a moment, then.)*  
CHARLES. Olf, get a shovel; then dig a hole. *(To Martin.)* We'll

bury him after sundown. *(Olf nods and exits.)*  
MARTIN. Why not baptize him as well? The night is young. *(Martin returns to his paperwork.)*  
CHARLES. The Pope must have been delayed for some reason. He's a very busy pontiff.  
MARTIN. Unless Brother Felix never made it to the Vatican ...  
CHARLES. The map was impeccable.  
MARTIN. I'm referring to his weakness for the fairer sex.  
CHARLES. If anyone keeps his word and his vows —  
MARTIN. Of course — there's nothing to tempt him here. But think: the allure of Italian women — dark-eyed, olive-skinned ... buxom? *(Charles begins to doubt for a moment.)* If he happened to succumb to a case of libido ...  
CHARLES. No; Felix may have made mistakes as a youth, but no one's as worthy of trust as he is. *(Olf has returned.)*  
OLF. Excuse me, Father. *(Martin glares at him.)* That wasn't interrupting.  
CHARLES. Yes?  
OLF. I had another question.  
MARTIN. Of course you did.  
OLF. Where did you want me to dig the hole?  
MARTIN. *(Beat.)* In the ground!  
OLF. I know that; I meant, which side of the churchyard wall?  
CHARLES. Oh, good question, Olf. Bury him — *(Suddenly, Felix, an earnest, intense young novice, bursts in, rambling, out of breath. The hem of his habit is muddy and frayed.)*  
FELIX. (... tell me it's not) true, tell me it's ... not true, tell me it's not — *(Felix practically collapses on top of Charles, grabbing his robes to hold himself up.)*  
CHARLES. Brother Felix ...  
FELIX. Tell me, say it's not ... *(He is gasping for breath.)*  
MARTIN. What's the matter?  
FELIX. Where is she?  
CHARLES. Who?  
FELIX. Where is she, where ... *(He looks beyond them, sees the saint, and lets out a piteous cry of relief. He pushes past them and rushes to it.)* God be praised. *(Felix falls to his knees, crosses himself, and begins praying fervently.)*

CHARLES. Brother Felix, what's going on? (*Felix begins to sob.*) What's happened? (*Felix tries to compose himself, catch his breath.*)

FELIX. I came as quickly as I could — I've been running for three days ...

MARTIN. Where's the Pope?

FELIX. (*Beat.*) Bernay.

CHARLES. Bernay?

OLF. That's not on the way from Rome.

MARTIN. Well, when's he coming here?

FELIX. He's not coming.

CHARLES. What?

MARTIN. I knew it ...

FELIX. I did my best, I tried, but —

CHARLES. What do you mean "not coming"?

MARTIN. I told you we should have promised a miracle.

CHARLES. Martin.

FELIX. He's gone to Bernay instead.

MARTIN. What's in Bernay? A second-rate convent run by a bunch of backwoods nuns.

CHARLES. They don't have a single relic, why —

FELIX. They got one.

MARTIN. No.

CHARLES. Did you talk to the Pope?

FELIX. By the time I made it to Rome, he'd already left.

CHARLES. But you were his escort ...

FELIX. I showed them the letter! "His plans have changed," a cardinal told me. "He's left for Bernay to see Saint Foy."

MARTIN. Saint Foy?

CHARLES. She's been *our* patron for 300 years!

FELIX. That's what I said! But since the Pope had already gone, I rode off like the wind to catch him. (*To Martin, apologetically:*) One of the donkeys died along the way.

MARTIN. (*Throwing up his hands.*) Wonderful. Perfect!

FELIX. (*With increasing awe.*) I arrived at the convent within a fortnight, and outside the chapel saw a crowd of pilgrims, pushing and shoving to get inside. Seeing my robes, they let me pass, and there in the darkness sat His Holiness on a regal dais near the altar. And on that altar, dimly lit, lay a martyr's bones in a purple cloth.

(*Charles and Martin look at each other.*) One by one the peasants knelt before the Pope — lepers, blind men, hopeless cripples — one by one they approached the altar, and one by one ... were healed. (*The others are astounded.*)

OLF. (*Quietly.*) ~~What a miracle!~~

FELIX. Dozens of them! A man drowned fishing the day before was raised like Lazarus to his feet, sputtering about a line that broke and the loss of a speckled trout.

MARTIN. You're kidding ...

FELIX. A child whose arm was horribly burned, the skin nearly gone, had the limb restored at once.

CHARLES. My God ...

FELIX. A hunchbacked woman with an oozing lump —

MARTIN. That will do, thank you, Felix.

CHARLES. Did you speak to the Pope?

FELIX. They wouldn't let me near him! When the sisters learned where I'd come from, they called out the abbess.

CHARLES. Oh, God ...

FELIX. A large, surly woman with a sour disposition.

CHARLES. I know it well.

FELIX. I figured, "At last I'll be treated like a fellow in Christ." But as soon as we passed the doors, she threw me down the steps! MARTIN. The insult!

FELIX. And then she told me why: (*With deliberation.*) She said Saint Foy had been brought to them by a one-eyed monk — a brother from *our* house.

CHARLES. *Our* house?

MARTIN. Nonsense.

OLF. A one-eyed monk?

FELIX. And for this they rewarded him with thirty gold pieces.

MARTIN. WHAT?!

CHARLES. No.

FELIX. I tried to protest, but she claimed I had only come to steal the relics back, and chased me from the convent with a chalice. And so, weary and confused, I hastened home as quickly as I could. (*Beat.*) That's when the other donkey died.

MARTIN. So much for eating the donkeys. (*Pause. They are stunned.*)