

## LANCELOT BOTTOMLEY THE RELUCTANT KNIGHT

There I lay nice and warm not caring who or what I was then something started to push me around and I could not understand what the hell it was, then I came into the world down some dark, wet tunnel and out into the bright lights of a room, with faces in mask's all around looking at me, then someone smacked me on the rear, and there I was a new life, then I was handed to someone who later on I found out was my mother, the masks were all smiling I assumed it was because of me.

I lay there in a kind of cage, and every few moments someone would come and pick me up and mess around with me, pushing things into my mouth and other places not to mention, mind you I must admit sometimes it tasted pretty good things that were put in my mouth if you know what I mean. I was awake, screaming, asleep, wetting the bed, dozing, then someone would come and pick me up once more and rock me from side to side, that was quite nice as well mind you whoever it was could not sing for shit. Then later on there were many strange faces staring at me, one of them, some ugly bloke said something to me, I had no idea what it was and I just screamed.

I did not know then what the devil was, but I guess he was the closest.

I found out later when I grew up, he was my uncle who had been injured in some way, but hey, how was I to know I am only a child, in fact he was a nice guy as uncles go. Then I was taken from the hospital as it was known, to my home to be where I was once again put in the cage, where strangers would come and stare at me, and say silly things like gar gar goo goo whatever that meant, sometime later on when I had been home some time not knowing what days or weeks where I will say some time.

Where, once again, I wet the bed screamed most of the night and did my number two's, but not knowing how to count me just pooped myself and my mother had to clean me, saying "who is a naughty boy." But not knowing I was a boy did not matter to me anyway.

The ceremony of the christening came around later all the prodders and pokers who came to the hospital were all there still prodding a poking once again.

Each one bearing the same silly grin on his or her face, I never knew it was because of me. Then this other strange person dressed in a frock muttered something to the others and they all grinned once more. I still had no idea this was all for me, then the frocked one spoke.

"What do I name this child."

I gathered the child me, was about to get a name, one I would never have expected and find very hard to live up to even today. My mother, I found out later had this thing for someone named Richard Gere. I thought, yeah, I could live with Richard Bottomley that sounds rather a cool name.

The Bottomley was a bit shitty but hey, beggars cannot be choosers as the saying goes, boy was I in for a surprise. Then the frocked one spoke once more.

Then he tried to drown me boy did I scream, what the hell is he trying to do to me, and why are you silly sods standing around letting him.

"I name this child Lancelot Bottomley."

"You what." I cried, Lancelot Bottomley, mother what the hell were you thinking of and you father why did you not stop her, or did you go along with this crap.

Why I was not named after one of the family members even the ugly dude was named Norman, come on even that is better than Lancelot.

Could you not choose from a book of names like normal people do, but you are not normal I completely forgot you know Richard would have been much nicer I could have lived with that. But this fateful day my fate and my life was sealed I was then put under

running water and that was that, then the prodders and the pokers once again prodded me and poked me and picked me up. They all had this strange smell on their breaths which I found out later was booze, then it was time for me to go to bed, I then got kissed many times boy was I glad when I was in bed.

But then I would wake up every so often screaming, then my father or mother would pick me up and stuff this rubber thing in my mouth, which was called feeding me, this is good I thought I might try this again, so I did many times. Then it would come out the other end, good god it smelt shocking, (bloody hell, did I do all that I ought to be ashamed of myself), but what the hell I am only a child and don't know any better. The time passed, I ate, I did the other thing many times, sometimes my father had the dubious task of changing me, which was not very often he said he had a weak stomach.

"What the hell have you been feeding this kid, it looks like an elephant has craped in here." he had a way with words my father.

The prodders and the pokers came many times, but I got used to this because they would come along bearing gifts, teddy, bears and other toys, to keep me amused or so my parents said. It was really to keep me entertained while they grunted and groaned in the next room, I had no idea what they were doing. I was to find out, when nine months later when my sister was born, the poor sod had to endure the prodders and the pokers, so what it took the heat off me for a while.

"What's up young man feeling lonely."

Someone picked me up.

(Oh go away and leave me alone, I was asleep not lonely you nerd). But what the hell it came with the territory. Then they were back, with the man in the frock once more, but I was not the one to get my head dunked in water, by the way she screamed as well

"I name this child Sharon Bottomley."

(Oh great, nice name I thought it might have been wonder women or something crazy like Mortisha or Zena woman warrior).

So now there are two of us, one boy one girl, she got all the attention while I got none, which is not really true I got a bit, but girls will be girls.

We grew up not knowing what life held in store for both of us and not really caring.

There was a lot of potty training and many times we could not wait, but hey, we are children how were we to know it was not the right thing to do.

The two of us sure kept them on the run, here cop for that there goes another load.

\*\*\*\*\*

I had never thought much of anything while lying in my cot and bed and why things were the way they were, and how other people thought, but it did take me by surprise the first day I attended school at the age of five. Tantrums and screams were the order of the day and that was only my father, no not really just joking, they dropped me off at school and smiled and left me to my fate. I was taken into what was to be my most awesome and most traumatic time of my tiny life and all because my silly mother and father called me Lancelot. Now I ask you whatever possessed them to do that please tell me, okay then don't. We were seated in little desks allocated to each of us, I had no idea what was to unfold and keep unfolding for a long, long time.

Class register, "Peter Jones." here miss, "Helen Carter." here miss, "Lancelot Bottomley." Utter silence.

After all, who the hell is going to answer to a name like that, the silence was deafening

"Lancelot Bottomley." She said once more, there was no getting away with it so I very quietly answered "Yes miss."

"Bottomley where are you." slowly raised my hand, then the giggles started.

"Silence." she shouted.

"Bottomley there is need to be ashamed of your name." That is easy for you to say miss I thought.

"But why did your mother name you Lancelot, have you any idea who Lancelot is or should I say was.

"No miss." I meekly answered.

"Well can any of you tell me." she asked.

You mean to tell me there is a real person with my name not just Richard Gere please tell me more. "No Miss." They all answered

"Well, maybe one day we may have a lesson about the man you are so aptly named after." Then she carried on the register. A lesson about me things were looking up, I am beginning to like school, but my euphoria was very short lived, and things like they say do not always turn out the way you want them to. The surname I could handle, well almost it could have been worse, I could have been called Potts or Crapps, funny that reminds me of my potty training So my first day at school everyone knew in my class that I had the silliest name, and by the end of the week the whole school knew of the gospel of Lancelot, which did not take long to spread around. I Could not think of how the teacher was going to get me out of this situation by having a lesson about why I was named Lancelot, so I resided myself to the fate that was now bestowed on me for life. I arrived home after my first day at school and my sister was sat up in her cot laughing.

"What are you looking at?" I asked.

"Oh, tut who has had a hard day at school?" She replied.

"Listen little sister it is hard out there in the big world, your turn will come believe me, and I hope you will be prepared, I need a drink."

"You should not drink milk it will give you cholesterol and at your age it can be dangerous."

I took no notice of her and raided the fridge, I slammed down a bottle of milk it tasted good, but then I was sick."

"You greedy little boy serves you right." My mother said as she mopped up the milky sick.

My mother and father had not realised naming me Lancelot had turned me to drink, how was I going to cope. Day two came