

GERASIMUS & JORDAN

**IF YOU LISTEN FOR A LITTLE WHILE, I'LL TELL TO YOU A STORY
THAT GOES BACK SIXTEEN HUNDRED YEARS TO AN DIM AND DISTANT DAY
IT'S A PLEASANT PIECE OF HISTORY THAT REALLY HAS TWO HEROES
AND I HOPE THAT YOU'LL REMEMBER THEM WHEN I'VE SAID ALL I HAVE TO SAY**

**ONE HERO IS A HOLY MAN WHO LEARNED TO LOVE THE DESERT
A QUIET AND A LONELY PLACE HE COULD GO TO THINK AND PRAY
THE OTHER IS THE KING OF BEASTS WE ALL KNOW AS A LION
AND THE TWO STRUCK UP A FRIENDSHIP IN A MOST UNLIKELY WAY**

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**NOW THE MONK'S NAME WAS GERASIMUS - WE'LL CALL HIM BROTHER GERRY -
WHO HAD MADE HIS WAY DOWN TO PALESTINE TO MAKE THE BEST OF LIFE
A PIOUS MAN BY ALL ACCOUNTS, HIS MONASTERY'S TREASURE
A MAN OF PEACE WHOSE VERY PRAYERS HEALED BITTERNESS AND STRIFE**

**ONE SUNNY DAY AS THE STORY GOES, BROTHER GERRY WENT OUT WALKING
TO SEEK A SHADY QUIET SPOT TO SAY HIS MORNING PRAYER
HE HAD SCARCELY KNELT AND BLESSED HIMSELF WHEN HE HEARD THE SOUND OF
ROARING
A LION TOO WAS SEEKING SHADE AND APPROACHED HIM UNAWARE**

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**BUT SOMETHING IN THE LION'S VOICE MADE BROTHER GERRY WONDER
IT SOUNDED MORE LIKE ANGUISH THAN A THREAT OR CRY OF HATE
THE CURIOUS MONK OVERCAME HIS FEAR, WENT TO SEE WHAT WAS THE MATTER
AND SURE ENOUGH THE KING OF BEASTS WAS IN A WOEFUL STATE**

**IT APPEARED THAT IN HIS WANDERINGS HE'D GOT TANGLED IN SOME NETTLES
AND NOW WAS SUFFERING TERRIBLY FROM A THORN STUCK IN HIS PAW
THE MONK KNEW WHAT HE HAD TO DO TO RELIEVE THE POOR OLD LION
HE HAD WORKED IN THE INFIRMARY AND HAD DONE IT ALL BEFORE**

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**WITH THE THORN REMOVED, THE PAW WAS BATHED WITH COOL AND SOOTHING
LOTIONS
AND THE LION IN HIS GRATITUDE BECAME THE MONK'S FAST FRIEND
HE'D FOLLOW HIM TO THAT DESERT SPOT TO ASSIST IN HIS DEVOTIONS
TAKE A CAT-NAP IN THE SUN'S FIERCE HEAT TILL THE PRAYERS CAME TO AN END**

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**THEY NAMED THE LION 'JORDAN' BECAUSE HE CAME FROM NEAR THE RIVER
THAT SUPPLIED THE COMMUNITY'S WATER FROM ITS STREAM SO COLD AND CLEAR
HIS JOB WAS TO PROTECT FROM HARM THE MONASTERY DONKEY
AND THE TWO BECAME INSEPARABLE AS THEY JOURNEYED FAR AND NEAR**

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**BUT ONE DAY A BAND OF TRADERS CAME UPON THE GRAZING DONKEY
AS JORDAN CHASED A PACK OF WOLVES A MILE OR SO AWAY
THEY QUICKLY SNATCHED THE HAPLESS BEAST AND RACED OFF ON THEIR CAMELS
BUT JORDAN NEVER HEARD THE SOUND OF THE DONKEY'S DESPERATE BRAY**

**IMAGINE HOW POOR JORDAN FELT WHEN HE CAME BACK TO THE BROTHERS
ALONE, WITHOUT THE DONKEY ON WHOSE WORK THEY DID DEPEND
HE COULD ONLY ANSWER QUESTIONS WITH A SAD LOOK OVER HIS SHOULDER
'THOU HAST EATEN HIM,' SAID THE ABBOT; 'BLESSED BE GOD', REPLIED HIS FRIEND**

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**'SO NOW THOU MUST DO DONKEY'S WORK,' SAID THE ABBOT TO THE LION
AND HE PATIENTLY FETCHED THE WATER, THE SHEAVES, THE STONES, THE WOOD
NO MORE THE FEARSOME KING OF BEASTS BUT A MONASTERY SERVANT
COULD HIS LION HEART HAVE TOLD HIM HE WAS RETURNING GOOD FOR GOOD?**

**THE YEARS ROLLED ON, THEN ONE FINE DAY AS JORDAN WAS OUT WORKING
HE SPOTTED A DISTANT CARAVAN AND HEARD THE FAMILIAR BRAY
OF HIS OLD COMPANION, THE DONKEY! SO HE CHARGED UP ROARING FIERCELY
AND FEARING FOR THEIR LIVES, THE TRADERS WISELY RAN AWAY**

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**THE MONKS ON THE MONASTERY WALL STOOD AMAZED AT THE PROCESSION -
JORDAN AND HIS DONKEY FRIEND, FIVE CAMELS IN THEIR TRAIN
THERE WERE TEARS OF JOY AND APOLOGIES FOR THE BASELESS ACCUSATIONS
TO THEIR SERVANT, NOW A KING AGAIN, HIS INNOCENCE MADE PLAIN**

**THEN FOLLOWED MANY HAPPY YEARS IN THAT DESERT MONASTERY
TIME GERRY AND HIS LION FRIEND WERE ALLOWED BY HEAVEN'S GRACE
TILL AT LAST ONE DAY BROTHER GERRY DIED, AND SOON THE GRIEVING LION
JOINED HIS HOLY FRIEND IN HEAVEN, LEAVING EARTH A SADDER PLACE**

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**SO NOW, DEAR FRIENDS, YOU KNOW THE TALE OF GERASIMUS AND JORDAN
IT'S ALL THERE IN THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS SO I'D LIKE TO THINK IT'S TRUE
A LESSON IN LOVE AND HUMILITY FROM A HOLY MAN AND A LION
FROM A FAR-OFF PLACE AND A DISTANT DAY WITH A MESSAGE ALWAYS NEW**

**WHEN YOU HEAR THE SUMMER THUNDER AND IT SOUNDS LIKE A LION ROARING
REMEMBER THIS LITTLE STORY AND ITS HEROES, MAN AND BEAST
THE KINDLY MONK AND HIS FAITHFUL FRIEND WHOSE LIVES WERE SPENT IN SERVICE
TO THE LORD AND TO HUMANITY, THE GREATEST AND THE LEAST!**

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SOURCE:

**ALBAN BUTLER'S LIVES OF THE SAINTS, COMPLETE EDITION
ED BY HERBERT THURSTON SJ AND DONALD ATTWATER
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