

When a Biker buys an old church, the small community asks why. They watch him begin the restoration. They get involved when they realize his mission is two-fold. He must rebuild the old sanctuary and he must rebuild himself.

Judge Not

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JUDGE NOT

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Preface

The auctioneer glanced up at the pale blue skies, trying to estimate the time of day. He noticed the few puffy white clouds that decorated the otherwise clear celestial region but paid them no mind. Rain was not in the forecast. Sweltering heat dominated the atmosphere. He wiped his brow as he glanced out at the small audience awaiting the opening bid on the dilapidated building and its adjoining twenty acres.

The building had been a church in its better years. Now, with its peeling paint and sagging roof, it stood as a sentinel, guarding the few headstones of a small graveyard that had been established to accommodate the homeless and the destitute.

Behind the building and off to the side, a weed-infested garden area awaited the toil of its next pastor, if there was to be a pastor. Past due taxes indentured the building and its garden.

The auctioneer looked up as the sound of a Harley vibrated through the almost still muggy air. He watched as the bike and its rider slowly, almost reverently, entered the small parking area and came to a stop. Everybody turned to inspect the leather-clad man as he shut down his bike, removed his

helmet, and slowly dismounted the big black Harley. They stood in awe when the warrior removed his black leather jacket, which revealed a sleeveless black shirt with a starched white collar encircling his thick neck. A glint of gold flashed in the sun's rays, drawing attention to the small gold chain that held a small gold cross, which was hanging on his massive chest. A murmur rippled through the crowd. The banging of the auctioneer's gavel drew their attention back to the business at hand.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began, "we have a minimum bid of five thousand dollars for this fine parcel of land. Do I have an opening bid?"

"Fifty-five hundred," called a stately older gentleman.

The auctioneer smiled. "We have a bid for fifty-five hundred from Mr. Baker for the bank. Do I hear fifty-six?"

"Fifty-six," called another.

"Fifty-seven," called a woman.

"We have fifty-seven. Mr. Baker, do I hear fifty-eight?"

Mr. Baker nodded.

"We have fifty-eight; do I hear fifty-nine?"

"Fifty-nine," called the woman.

"We have fifty-nine; do I hear six thousand?"

Mr. Baker nodded.

"We have six thousand from the bank. Do I hear sixty-one?"

He paused, waiting for another bid. After a moment, he began anew. "Will somebody give me sixty-one hundred for this beautiful piece of land?"

"I'll give you sixty-one if the bank will hold the mortgage," called a farmer from the rear of the small crowd.

Mr. Baker smiled as he turned toward the bidder. "We'd hold the lien, Clem, but you don't have any money!"

The small crowd chuckled.

Smiling, the auctioneer started again. "Do I have a bid for sixty-one hundred?" After a moment's pause, the auctioneer nodded. "We have a bid for six thousand. Do I have an offer for sixty-one?" He paused. "For this parcel of land, we have a bid

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of six thousand dollars.” He paused. “Six thousand going once...” He paused. “Going twice...” He scanned the small crowd. “Going, going...”

The big biker standing in the back spoke for the first time, his deep voice rumbling as he spoke. “I’ll give you sixty-one.”

A hush fell over the crowd.

“We have a bid for sixty-one; do I have a bid for sixty-two?”

Mr. Baker glared at the big man. “I’ll give you sixty-five.”

The big biker spoke again. “I’ll give you sixty-six.”

“Seven,” came the response from Mr. Baker.

“Seventy-one,” replied the biker.

“Seventy-five,” Mr. Baker rebutted.

“Seventy-six.” The biker began strolling toward the front of the crowd.

“Seventy-eight,” Mr. Baker challenged.

“Seventy-nine.” The biker looked into the banker’s eyes.

Without breaking eye contact, Mr. Baker asked, “This is a cash sale, is it not?”

The auctioneer nodded. “Yup, cash or a certified check.”

Mr. Baker smiled. “Eight thousand dollars.”

The biker nodded. “Eighty-one.”

Mr. Baker submitted. “Let’s see if you have eight-thousand, one hundred dollars cash!”

“Do I win the bid if I do?” the biker asked.

Mr. Baker nodded. “If you can lay down eight-thousand, one hundred dollars cash, today, right now, I’ll withhold any future bid.”

The biker nodded. “Sold.” The biker walked back to his bike. He opened the saddlebag on the right side and extracted a thick manila envelope. He walked back up to the podium. He opened the envelope. “Do I get the title today?” he asked.

Mr. Baker nodded. “All you have to do is pay the money, and you’ll get the title.”

“Good,” was all he said as he slowly counted out the greenbacks.

Mr. Baker, seeing all that money stacked in neat little piles, turned to face the big biker. “Who, if I may inquire, do we have the pleasure of welcoming into our small community?”

The big man shoved the remaining bills back into the envelope. “Ronald Patrick O’Leary,” he answered as he turned to face the banker. “That’s the name I want on the title.”

Mr. Baker looked up at the mountain-of-a-man. “Well, Mr. O’Leary, I welcome you to our community. I own the bank in this town, and if I can be of any service to you, please feel free to call on me.”

“Thank you, but no thank you,” the biker stated. “I don’t trust banks.”

“Oh, uh, well, uh, what’re your plans for this place?” Mr. Baker inquired.

“I’m going to live here!”

Mr. Baker grinned. “In this old church?”

The big man gazed at the old building with its peeling paint, its sagging roof, and the weeds in the garden. He nodded. He turned toward the banker. “This will be my home.”

* * * * *

“Ronald Patrick O’Leary—is that how you want the deed registered?” asked the banker, sitting behind his glistening oak desk.

“Yup,” responded the big man sitting on the opposite side.

The banker nodded as he filled out the rest of the blanks on the quick claim deed. After a few minutes of silence, the banker looked across the majestic desk at the big man. “Okay then, I think that just about wraps it up. All you have to do now is pay the fees with a money order or a certified check, which we at the bank can provide for a minimal fee, then you can take this down to the post office, and send it registered mail to the county seat where it will be recorded, and a new deed will be issued. Are you okay with that?”

The big man nodded. “I can do that.”

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“Then I think you’re in business.” The banker paused. “Are you really going to live in that old church?”

The big man smiled, showing a perfect set of white teeth. “Yup, that will be my home.”

“Well, good luck. You’re going to need it.” The banker stood. “Is there anything else I can help you with?”

The big man thought for a moment. “You could direct me toward the nearest hardware store.”

The banker nodded. “Two blocks down and one across. Gus will help you.”

The big man nodded. “Thank you for your time.”

“Don’t mention it.” The banker watched as the big biker strolled out of his office. He stood and watched as the big man purchased the money order. The banker shook his head. He chuckled to himself. “That man is going to give these people something to talk about.”

And now the story begins.

When a Biker buys an old church, the small community asks why. They watch him begin the restoration. They get involved when they realize his mission is two-fold. He must rebuild the old sanctuary and he must rebuild himself.

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