

Hizzoner

*By Marilyn Reeves*

It all started the other night when I came down to the kitchen for some water and saw that rat scratchin' at the pie keep. Next morning I went out to the shed to grab the bottle of rat poison, and nearly had a heart attack when that horrible old bull dog snarled and snapped at me and I thought I was a goner! Thank heaven that heavy chain held and I was able to skirt around him before he could tear my throat out. Hizzoner prizes that mean old dog – seems like the two of them have very compatible dispositions, if you know what I mean.

Once I got back to the kitchen I sat there starin' at that rat poison and thinkin' there might be other uses for it besides getting rid of those damnable rats.

I've heard the lads down to the pub talkin' about how they dread the thought of going before that mean old judge. Hizzoner always imposes the cruelest penalties out of proportion to the crime committed. Damn near killed the town drunk Lenny Bascom, making him stand out there in the hot sun digging that trough, with poor Lenny not having hardly any meat on his bones to begin with.

And then there's the way he treats the Missus, and us servants here at the house. Just this last week I caught him pawing at pretty little Bridget – and her tryin' desperately to pull away from him. Soon as I cleared my throat to announce my presence, he let go her waist and Bridget fled down the hallway.

He sits at the table pontificatin' to the Missus about his self-importance, how he's the by-God appointed savior of this town, and how them lads better mind their ways or pay the consequences. And the poor, frail old Missus just sits there tremblin' and starin' into the fire. I don't think she hears a word he says. Don't know if he beats her, but it wouldn't surprise me none. I've seen him whip that beautiful horse till it'd rear up and darn near topple the carriage and him with it. He's a cruel and evil man, Hizzoner is, and something needs to be done about it.

That rat poison sure gives me ideas. First that damnable dog, and then maybe just a drop or two in Hizzoner's brandy. Wonder how many drops it would take? Or more important, if I could get away with it. It would take a lot of careful planning.

In the meantime, I've been keeping that poison hidden in the back of the cupboard, but every so often I pull it out and ponder over it. Haven't done nothin' yet, of course, but I sure have been thinkin' about it.