**The Original ENF**
by The Controverser

I sighed. This argument was getting old. I could not believe that we were having it yet again. This was the fifth time in a week and I was starting to become angry. I knew that my darling wife wanted to be a champion of sorts for the people but enough was enough.

Grabbing her by the shoulder, I started to drag her into our bedroom. Opening up her closet, I pointed to the elegant gowns and dresses that had been hung up by her attendant, Mary. Each one was different from the other and were made with the most expensive material around.

“You complain that the taxes are too high and yet you forget that it is the same high taxes that pay for your fine apparel. I believe you would complain all the louder if you had to do without them,” I said with a satisfied grin.

“No, Leofric. I would gladly do without them if it meant you would ease up on the people. They are suffering. Many of them must go without meals because of your high taxes. It isn't fair. Take my expensive clothes and sell them! I can do without them and it will satisfy for greed,” she said meekly.

Surely she was joking! Her gowns and dresses were her most cherished possessions. She was the envy of every noble woman when we threw parties. How could she possibly say such foolishness?

I paused. Perhaps I could show her the error of her ways. Perhaps I could end this tiresome argument once and for all. She says that she can go without the dresses, then I will challenge her to do just that. If she completes the challenge, then I will give her what she wants. She will have earned it.

“You want the taxes lowered and say you are willing to do away with your fine apparel, right?” I asked.

“Yes,” she said with a nod.

“Prove it. I will lower the taxes AND you can even keep your dresses and gowns,” I told her.

“I do not understand,” she said, raising an eyebrow. “I thought I would be made to go without them.”

“You will, my dear. Just once. In order for me to lower the taxes on the people you love so much, you will ride your horse through town without wearing one of your dresses or gowns,” I told her.

“So, if I ride through town, on my horse, wearing commoners' clothes, you will lower the taxes?” she asked, sounding skeptical.

“No, my dear. You misunderstand. You will not be wearing commoners' clothes on your ride through town,” I said with a smile.

“Then what shall I wear?” she asked, clearly not understanding.

“Your beautiful smile,” I told her.

I will never again forget the look of surprise on her face as she realized what I intended for her to do. The gradual widening of her eyes, the way her lips parted into a perfect circle. I could not help but grinning.

“NAKED!?” she shouted. “You want me to ride through town naked!?”

“That's right, my dear wife. No shoes, no clothes. Just your smile and your hair,” I said.

“I couldn't possibly do that!” she cried. “I just can't!”

“Oh, so you would put your own modesty over the people who are suffering so much? Tsk, tsk, tsk. Perhaps you don't care about them as much as you believe you do,” I said, tasting the sweet savor of victory.

“You... you... you are right,” she said, her voice trembling. “I will do it. For the people.”

I hadn't expected her to accept this challenge. I knew she'd react the way she did when she realized what the challenge was but I thought she'd let the subject drop, defeated. Now, the choice was mine. Let her go through with it or stop her.

“Very well, my dear, make whatever preparations you must. Your ride commences one hour before sunset,” I told her.

“Thank you,” she said meekly before leaving the room.

I sat on our bed after she left and considered what I had just done. My lovely, kind, wife was going to remove all of her clothes and ride through town for the people that she loved. The bravery of that woman was unmatched by anyone.

For accepting this challenge, I would make sure that everyone knew this story for generations to come. This would be a tale that would still be told in the distant future. This story would even outlive my very own legacy.

Forcing myself to stand, I marched out of the room and attended to my duties which consisted of several meetings. I admit that I found it hard to concentrate and I felt myself becoming obsessed with the thought of my wife, naked, on her white horse for all to see.

When my last meeting concluded, William, my chief guard, stepped inside my office and walked towards me with an alarmed expression on his face. My body tensed slightly as a fear that something may have happened to my wife.

“What is it?” I asked him.

“Your Grace, it would appear that all of the shops in Coventry have closed,” William told me.

“All of the shops? They don't close until dark,” I said, confused.

“I know it. Not only are the shops closing but all of the houses have closed their shutters and their doors. There is not an open window or door to be found in all of Coventry,” William said.

“Wait, houses as well? Has my wife been to town today?” I asked.

“I did see her return recently,” William answered with a nod.

I laughed and shook my head. So that was her game. She went to town and tipped everyone off about the ride. She surely told them what was asked of her and told them what she was willing to do for them and asked them to stay indoors the entire ride. How delightfully intelligent.

I will admit that I was quite disappointed that all of the people would not be seeing her naked on her horse but I cannot fault her for what she did. I had failed to impose rules on the ride and I did tell her to make the necessary preparations. She did indeed.

I told William about the challenge I had for my wife and he looked surprised. I told him that the entire staff would be gathered outside to see her off. I told him that he would accompany me as I rode behind her. She may have made the request but that didn't mean someone wouldn't ignore it and try something. I told William that if anyone did try something, it would cost them their life. William nodded in agreement.

“Oh, and William?” I said, a sudden after thought occurred to me.

“Yes, your Grace?” William asked.

“Don't tell any of the staff why they are gathering outside. I want it to be a surprise for them and my wife,” I said with a grin.

“As you wish,” William said before retreating from my office.

Now, I went to find my wife. Predictably, I found her in the stable, sitting on a bench in front of her horse. She was staring so thoughtfully that I almost didn't have the heart to interrupt her thoughts but before I could retreat, she turned and gave me a smile-- something I wasn't expecting.

“I want to thank you again for what you are doing,” she said.

“You are really going to do this?” I asked.

“Oh, it is the least I could do for the people,” she said. “I have something to tell you.”

“Yes?” I asked.

“I made a request of the people,” she said shyly.

“So I've been told. It seems that the people love you as much as you love them,” I said with a smile.

She smiled back and nodded. I watched, my breath catching in my throat as she stood up and untied the lace that was holding her dress up. In seconds, it fell to the ground and she stepped out of it and picked it up. She folded it neatly and placed it on the bench before going to work on her undergarments.

I couldn't help but look around to see if anyone was watching. I knew the staff would see her soon enough but the idea that someone would see her here in the stable made my heart beat faster. It was almost as if I was hoping they would but it never happened.

When she had removed all of her clothing, she walked to her horse and I helped put the saddle on before helping her up. I took a step back and smiled. She was the absolute vision of beauty-- worthy of being remembered for this for all time. I was a very lucky man.

I walked ahead of her and as soon as I reached the door to the stable, I saw the men and women who worked at our estate, all gathered around and none save for William, knowing what was happening. I smiled and stepped aside, allowing my wife to ride out into the open. I heard the gasp from her as she saw the staff but it was nothing compared to what I heard from the staff.

“Is that the Countess?” someone from the back asked.

“It is! It's Lady Godiva!” another person confirmed.

“She isn't wearing any clothes!” one of the maids cried out.

“She is naked!” someone added.

I could see my wife's cheeks reddening as she brought her horse to a halt in front of the staff. I don't believe I have seen a single person blink-- all of them were taking in my wife's naked body in all its glory.

“Why?” the maid asked. “Why are you naked?”

“I am doing this for the people. My husband has offered a solution to the people's tax burden. If I ride through the town as I am now, he will lower the taxes,” my wife explained.

“My lady, may I approach?” the voice was from her nineteen year old attendant.

My wife nodded her head and her attendant ran off. She returned with a small wooden step stool and brought it close to my wife's horse. She reluctantly climbed the step stool so that she was right next to my wife. Was she planning to ride as well?

Her attendant simply reached forward and grabbed my wife's hair. I watched, not knowing what she was doing but I was ready to call the guard at any moment. Almost as quickly as she started, she finished and climbed back down the ladder.

Not able to stand it any longer, I walked to the side to see what the attendant had done. A smile formed at my lips. It wasn't just the common people who loved my wife but the staff as well, especially her young attendant. The attendant had used my wife's long hair to cover her breasts. Again, no rule was broken.

With a snap of my finger, a servant went and saddled my own horse and brought him to me. William went to saddle a horse and I asked him to bring another as well. William returned, walking two horses behind him. I rode my horse close to my wife and addressed her attendant.

“You may accompany Lady Godiva,” I told her.

I had expected a look of gratitude on her face but instead found fear and dread. Slowly, the girl looked around at the other servants before reaching for the lace of her uniform. I quickly reached my hand out and stopped her.

“No, no, dear. You may be clothed,” I told her with a laugh.

The other servants snickered and the poor girl looked completely relieved that she was not going to share in my wife's naked ride. With the help of a servant, the attendant climbed up onto her horse and the four of us set out for my wife's challenge.

As we entered the town, I can safely say that William was correct. There wasn't a single door or shutter opened. The red in my wife's cheeks never once lessened as she rode, completely naked where the people she loved so much went about their daily lives on every other day.

Out of the corner of my eye, I thought I saw movement but when I looked up, I saw the shutter of the window still in place. There was, however, a small crack in the shudder and even though I could not be sure, I thought I saw an eyeball moving beyond the crack. Perhaps there was a commoner peeping at my wife after all.

Her ride did not take long and as we returned, I stared at her with pride. She had championed for her people and she had fulfilled her end of the bargain. I would do as she requested and lessen the taxes on her people. She is forever a legend in my eyes.

My wife. My lady. Godiva.

**Epilogue**

While my mother and father were busy closing up the shop, I had plenty of time to put my plan into action. I used some of my father's tools and chipped away a small crack in the shutters. It was barely noticeable unless you really looked for it.

Bending over slightly, I checked my handiwork and was rewarded with a clear view of the streets. The Countess would be riding through the street soon and I was going to see my first real life naked woman! No clothes at all!

I could hardly stand the wait!

Lucky for me, my mother and father were busy in the kitchen where I could watch undisturbed. Finally, the moment approached and there she was, sitting on a white horse! Her long, curly red hair was draped down to cover her breasts but I had never seen so much skin in my life. The pale white curves of her body were amazing!

Suddenly, I heard my mom's voice from behind me and she sounded mad!

“You had better not be PEEPING, Tom!” she yelled.

And that was the day I received the nickname that would haunt me for the rest of my life. My mother told everyone what I had done and now, everywhere I went, people always called me...

Peeping Tom.