

A Head for a Head

A Twisted Tale of Saint Winefride

PART I

A prince would often go riding in one of the many gloomy woods which surrounded his father's kingdom, when one day he rode further than usual. Leaving the dark wood, he discovered many beautiful rolling hills - and a very beautiful maiden. On seeing her, the prince thought, 'Now surely this is the most beautiful maiden throughout the kingdom. If she will marry me, she will make a fine queen.' And dismounting his horse, and tying it to a nearby tree, he approached the maiden, and called to her:

'Speak thy name, fair maiden to me,

If not betrothed, I will have thee.'

The maiden replied that her name was Winefride, and that she was betrothed only to God. Pleased with this news, the prince asked that she speak with him and so she did. She told him that her family was fortunate, and that her uncle was a saint by name of Beuno, who had a chapel at their garden's end. She pointed towards a small stone chapel at the bottom of the hill and said, 'There it is'.

The prince listened gladly, understanding there to be no betrothed suitor, and announced that he was Caradoc, son to the king. He talked at length of the many acres of forestry within his kingdom. It was only as the sun turned a dazzling ruby that Winefride remembered she had promised to meet her uncle at his chapel to pray. She started to bid the prince farewell when he clasped her hands in his and asked her to marry him.

Struck and bewildered, Winefride said to him, 'I cannot marry you, my Prince, for I am betrothed to God.'

At this, he smiled and said to her, 'Why, my dear Winefride, that is all well, for I am a prince and so am chosen by your God. He would joyously have you take my hand.'

Now, Winefride knew not what to say to him, and she thought for a moment before telling him, 'I am sorry, my Prince, but my answer remains. I am betrothed only to God, and so you ask me in vain'.

The prince's heart fell at the maiden's refusal, and quickly releasing her hands he said, 'Though your answer saddens me, if that is your decision, then so it shall be.' At which he started to return to his horse.

Winefride now, feeling quite sad for the prince, called to him as he went away, 'It gladdens my heart that we met, Sir. Should you come this way riding again, stop at the chapel so that we may pray there together.' And ever thoughtful of her uncle waiting for her, she left the prince without awaiting a response and started toward home.

It was as she ran down the rolling hill, her hair whistling in the wind, that she thought she heard footsteps behind her. She decided however, that she must imagine it for when she glanced over her right shoulder, not a soul was there. She continued to run some way further before she considered what the sound might be.

Turning to look over her left shoulder this time, she saw the line of a glittering silver sword before it cut through her neck, leaving her head to roll down the hill towards her uncle's chapel.

Once it had stilled, two glassy eyes peered from the head as Prince Caradoc fled, galloping through the wood and returning to his father's kingdom.

But this was not the end.

PART II

Prayer can only last so long, even for saints. Contemplated the elderly Saint Beuno, rising from the hard ground and resting against a nearby pillar before indulging some haggard breaths. Though he had spent many hours in prayer, his eyes enclosed in darkness, as the sun journeyed the sky, his mind was in torment. For during this transition, he had long awaited his niece's company, certain that each groan or creak announced her arrival. Yet he had waited in vain, for Winefride never came.

The emptiness of the chapel made him feel uneasy: her absence made him feel uneasy. This was not at all like Winefride, and so a sickening feeling swelled in his holy heart, and clasping once more at the old pillar, he withdrew and headed toward the chapel door so he might rest his eyes upon the silent hills and hopefully sight his niece. But he saw nothing.

'It is possible she retired home, though I know in my bones that she did not.' He muttered aloud, still scanning the scape for a wisp of blonde. That was when he saw it, though it could not be his niece - for it was deadly still and on the ground, the mere size of a fallen nest, which Beuno decided was what it must be.

'An unfortunate omen.' He mused, as a small robin landed near him, cocking its head and chirping, belly pulsing as it did.

The man closed his eyes, the breeze brushing his papery skin and the sound of water trickling into his ear. A line now sketched upon his forehead, for he knew no stream ran in these surroundings. Peering curiously at the nest, feeling something was amiss, he approached it,

and discovered that a spring had risen from the earth just a pace from where it was. Kneeling down, he reached a hand to the water which flowed gladly, then reaching unto the nest he felt not dried grass, or rough branches, but soft silken threads, like golden hair... familiar golden hair. His eyes, without instruction, diverted their gaze to the top of the hill and there with the red sun simmering upon it, lay the headless body of his niece, her blue skirts flowing downward, a deep red ribbon curling from her neck.

Suppressing the seed of terror lodged in his throat, he turned the head to face him and found the familiar starry eyes of his beloved niece. All he could say was, 'Winefride! Whatever happened for you to lose a head as lovely as yours?'

Winefride could give no answer. But yet her gaze rested on her uncle, who wiped his wrinkled brow and began ascending the hill.

And so it was that Saint Beuno woefully carried his niece's head under one arm and dragged along her body with the other. While he walked, Winefride's glassy eyes remained vacant and spiritless; yet nonetheless, seemed haunted by Caradoc's departure.

When Beuno reached his home, he was fortunate to find the household readying for bed. With a silent and steady stride, Beuno pulled the body to his chamber, cautious to make no sound. Once inside, he placed Winefride against the door. Then, turning to his desk, he swept his scrolls aside, and in their place, positioned her head.

'What will I do with you?' he said, looking upon her sorrowfully, when from across the chamber, a needle's glint found his eye. This needle was near a large basket of thread, and Beuno knew his seeing it must be God's given counsel. He whispered tearfully to the crucifix

which hung above his bed, 'I thank thee for thy mercy', and then retrieved the needle. It sparked in the candlelight, sharp and ready; and thus, he went to the basket and chose a thread as fair as his niece's brow. Then, he brought her body from the door and rested it against his bed so that her severed neck might be worked at from his chair. And with thread in one hand, he placed the head unto her neck and prayed to his watchful crucifix before beginning to stitch.

It was at the first stitch that his niece's eyes danced with life; and when he spoke her name, her glassy eyes shifted to look at him. A salted tear fell from his eye and he continued to stitch this way, right around her neck until she was whole again. At the close of this final stitch, a small tremor shook the chamber and with it, Beuno's crucifix unfastened from its place on the wall, landing face down upon the floor. However, so overcome with joy were Winefride and her uncle, that they did not notice it. Winefride thanked him for his kindness, upon which he asked her:

'Winefride, my dear kind niece,

Who took your lovely head

And left you lying piece by piece,

Wanting you for dead?'

To which she responded, 'A Prince Caradoc, uncle.'

'Then you must speak of Prince Caradoc of Hawarden. Why, he rides far from his kingdom.

How was it that he came to take your head?'

'He asked my hand in marriage, uncle, and I refused. I told him, I am betrothed to God.'

'He took your head for your refusal? 'Tis a great error of princes indeed to think they bear rights to all,' said the old man wistfully.

‘Uncle, that is not the worst of it. He deemed my decision well; then he deceived me and took my head.’ And how a most bitter taste brimmed on the tip of her tongue as she recounted the details. She lifted a hand to her neck, forgetting the wound, and winced with sharp pain.

‘Practice carefulness: your neck will bear pain for some time, and recovery may be long.’

Beuno rose from his chair and attended his bedside where he soaked a washcloth at the basin.

‘Here,’ said he, passing her the cloth.

She smiled though her pain was great and then tended carefully to each stitch on her sorry neck. As she slowly bathed it, a silence ensued between them both, before Winefride dared put forward the matters of her mind. ‘Uncle...’ she began, to which the reply was, ‘Yes, Winefride?’

‘This situation has made me think upon a matter.’

He nodded, bidding her continue.

‘I wish to relate something the prince said, uncle, and know if you believe it true: for he claimed that he, and his father with him, were chosen by our God.’

Uncle Beuno expressed a long and heavy breath. ‘If scribes write truth, then so it is. But you must beware, Winefride, for many times a manuscript may fall victim to a poisoned quill; much as a prince may stray from God’s design.’

Winefride considered her uncle thoughtfully, and said, ‘I think it may be time you rest, dear uncle. A long and arduous plight you have endured this afternoon. Shall I fetch Helena to ready you for sleep?’

‘Nay, I will be well. Take leave, make prayer and rest your sorry head.’

Winefride smiled at her uncle, though an unfamiliar feeling was borne within her. He might do well to blame poisoned quills, and princely diversions from design; but she had

reservations on offering prayer to any who would give succour to the likes of Caradoc. But she could not tell her uncle that. At least, not yet. So she replied, ‘Of course, uncle. Good night; and thank you, again, for my head.’

Beuno smiled at his kind niece and bade her goodnight. But Winefride walked the passage from his chamber with guilt tied tightly to her chest. It was as she reached the foot of the stairwell that she heard a faint creak and found her uncle before her again. ‘Uncle, you are meant to be abed.’

His breaths were short and urgent; and his forehead creased with contemplation. ‘Winefride, pray understand and wear this about your neck – for I know not how people might take a resurrection thus.’

She felt a fury dance within her heart as she looked upon the scarf in her uncle’s hands. Still, she took it and placed it about her neck; and they bade each other goodnight once more.

PART III

Winefride’s dreams were blunt and bloody; and her very soul simmered with an unfamiliar volatility. As soon as her eyes closed, Caradoc appeared, sword drawn, and with a wicked and venomous look. She felt again how her head fell from her body, into a hundred sharp blades of grass; her eyes watching after the prince who had taken her life.

She woke in fits, the bedsheets stuck to her with the feel of dried blood, her heart as if galloping down a hill. As she lay awake - her head light, and her neck heavy; stitches exposed in the lake of cold moonlight - she heard a whisper in the dark:

‘An eye for an eye, a head for a head,

one rides off lightly,

the other left for dead.'

'Who is there?' Winefride called into the chamber, searching the dark for unfamiliar shadows, when another whisper quivered at her ear. And she could not tell it from her own mind; for it felt laden with familiarity, yet sounded tainted with unsaintliness: '*Do you think Caradoc loses sleep to thoughts of you?*' Now, she sat upright and held the cover tight to her chest. From whence did these whispers come? Were they her own thoughts, or those of other? Be it either, their meaning shuddered in her soul; and her mind turned upon its axel.

She woke tired that next morning, for her mind had denied her rest and the whispers had remained unceasing. Yet, as usual, she went to pray with her uncle, for though her mind was changed, she deemed it unwise to have him know.

She stood in the chapel entrance, finding Beuno knelt in deep and pious prayer within. At first, she did not join him but rather stood and surveyed the small stone structure which just yesterday she had loved so dearly. It was a love which had soured like deserted wine. Without lifting his head, Beuno called out, 'Is that you, Winefride?', and she responded that it was, and he asked she pray beside him.

She joined him not as herself, but as some cunning vessel of vengeance. She closed her eyes and clasped her own hands as her uncle continued prayer.

After what seemed the longest of times, they left the chapel in solemn silence. But where usually they might share thoughts on scripture, Beuno noticed his niece today was preoccupied with the wood; and over the next few days he found an unwelcome change in her. Where once she was kind and gentle, she now grew distant and withdrawn, and her warmth waned. And oh, what a wicked look she had when she longingly beheld the wood.

Now, Beuno thought this change in his niece must have cause and be a great one too to deter her gratitude for God's good gift of life. And so, three nights of woeful whispers and two days of empty prayer passed before Beuno asked what troubled her. And as she watched the wood, he so foolishly stumbled upon her thoughts and said:

‘My dear niece, a trouble sits upon your mind; speak it so we may seek counsel.’

And Winefride spoke falsely when she replied, ‘Alas, uncle, I am sure you must mistake my deepest gratitude for some other sentiment.’

Beuno knew she lied and said: ‘I know your true prayer Winefride, and know it now hollows. Speak your troubles.’

With a heavy sigh, Winefride told her uncle, ‘You have asked and so I will speak truthfully. Uncle, I wish not to sadden you - but no longer am I governed by devotion: rather, I find myself governed by a cruel pain and a confused heart. I think all I once believed was farce.’

Beuno faltered at his niece's words. He was hurt by her pain and pained by her confusion. For her to accuse God of disingenuity, rather than declare His honour! Why, her pain must be severe to have her know such insanity.

She continued in his silence, for his mind brewed. ‘He who I served, who *we* served, cared not to serve me!’

‘Oh, Winefride dear, do you not see: your head's return- that was He!’

Winefride laughed heartily at this. ‘Tis a most ingenuous act to create a false predicament for want of showing piety.’ Then she bitterly bit upon her lip and said, ‘Faithfully I served Him.’

‘And,’ Beuno took her hands gently, wanting to help his niece. ‘He has served you.’

‘Perhaps it ends with that exchange then, uncle. For now, I bear this ugly mark upon my neck and will not be as once I was. If not the bitterness of betrayal, then this pain will surely make me mad. No longer can I live thus.’

‘Winefride, see reason. Pain is but a small price to pay when you have been given life again!’

‘That may be true, dear uncle. However, I find ‘tis too large a price to be paid by a faithful servant!’

Beuno now withdrew his hands in a rising temper. ‘Oh! Stubborn and foolish you are, Winefride, to not find any compassion for the Lord who healed you!’

And then in his niece flickered a look that Beuno had not before seen in her. It was dark, devious and devilish.

‘You have changed, child.’

With this dark glint in her eyes, she went silently from the chapel and to her chamber. She was not seen and did not see any until the day had darkened and a knock sounded at her door. She responded, ‘Enter’, and found her sorry uncle in the doorway.

‘Good eve, uncle.’

A faint smile faltered on his lips, and he asked if he may speak with her; to which she responded that he could.

‘I seek forgiveness for my ill temper before, Winefride.’

‘That is quite well, uncle, for you returned my mind to where it should be. Your counsel was well received, and I thank you for it.’

‘Then I am pleased to have aided you. I will depart.’ And though he spoke firmly, he hesitated.

‘What is it, uncle? I sense you are ill at ease.’

And this was true, for though he had not confessed it, Beuno had repressed his own stirred heart; and too, no longer rested deeply. It was as though puddles of blood now bloomed from his shallow sleep.

‘Well, child, I ought tell you something too. This strange feeling unsettles me, and I come to question my given counsel.’

With this, Winefride smiled and said, ‘Why then, let me tell you my idea,’ And so she relayed her plans to her uncle who in turn listened closely and thought carefully upon the matter.

‘Tomorrow morning,’ she said, ‘when mother and father and the housekeeper are still abed, I will walk and find a woodman and trade my gold necklace for his axe. Then, I shall hide the axe in the hedgerow and return for it at night.’

‘What would you want with an axe, Winefride?’

‘Well, let me disclose my purpose,’ she said and continued. ‘Tomorrow evening, when mother and father and the housekeeper are abed, I will go to the wood and fetch the axe I traded with the woodman. Then I will go to Prince Caradoc and cut off his head.’

Beuno reddened at this and said, ‘Did you lose your mind when you lost your head?’

‘I should imagine so.’

‘And is it lost still?’

‘Heed me uncle, for this is only God’s design: an eye must be taken for an eye; and so, a head shall be taken for a head.’

‘You do right to cite scripture. But still, it must be God’s own design to take Caradoc’s head.’

‘And yet, uncle, do we not only act through God’s will? We are holy people and so it was that He brought me back to you and let you back to me. God’s design is in His mind until He puts it unto ours: without your stitch, His wish would not have come to pass.’

Beuno mused. ‘You must be wise beyond your years, Winefride; or foolish beneath them.’

‘Then will you assist me, uncle, be it wise or foolish?’

Beuno knew he should not. Yet he loved his niece so dearly that he agreed.

And so early that next morning, when all slept beside the anxious Beuno and the strong-willed Winefride, she left for the wood, wearing her gold necklace. She returned just before the sun had risen and joined her uncle at his chapel. She knelt at the alter with a heavy spiritedness that Beuno considered at odds with holy faith. Yet at this time, he was at the least thankful to see his niece pray without vacuity.

At prayer’s close, they left the chapel and Beuno went to ask Winefride how went her trade with the woodman when he noticed the gold necklace about her neck.

‘Alas then, your trade was not a glad one?’

‘Twas glad enough.’

‘Then why does your necklace still lie upon your neck, Winefride?’

Lifting her fingers to the necklace, she said, ‘Dear uncle, you are mistaken, for this which rests upon my neck is another necklace.’

Beuno knew the necklace was the very same one but said no more. Winefride then asked him; ‘Uncle, will you join me this eve when I venture to Caradoc’s kingdom? It would be good to have company in the dark of night, and I would thank you kindly for it.’

And so it was that in the gloom of dusk that eve, Winefride and her uncle readied themselves for the dark wood, bound for Caradoc's head.

PART IV

They walked awhile without retrieving the axe, leaving Beuno evermore curious of where Winefride had left it. She only ever said that it was some way further, and they continued walking. Some time passed before they heard the crack of a branch, and they knew they were no longer alone. A feeling of dread came over Beuno, when another loud noise sounded from a nearby tree, and something dull shone in the dark.

A man appeared and declared at once, 'Take no fright old man. I know your niece.'

And Winefride said, 'Uncle, this is the woodman with whom I traded; he brings with him his axe.'

'But Winefride - you did not mention this to be your plan?'

'I thought you would not take kindly to it.'

'I do not. And yet you leave me without choice. I will not make it from the wood alone now.

Tell me- do you harbour more secrets?'

'No, uncle,' Winefride answered truthfully.

And so they continued their journey, guided by the woodman whom Beuno questioned intently. He learnt that many in Hawarden took fault with Prince Caradoc - the woodman included. And Beuno knew then that they truly did God's work.

Sometime later, they reached Hawarden. Winefride thought the castle the most beautiful thing to behold- striking and tall, with many turrets and flickering windows, perched like a large golden bird upon the mount. Meanwhile, Beuno fell to his knees upon the hard ground. His very being ached – his mind fatigued with worry, and his legs were numb and tired. He asked God to provide strength for himself and Winefride, and it was duly given. Strength thus restored, he rose with the spirit of youth and asked the woodman how they would enter the fort.

‘Why, old man, I have traded here and know the castle well,’ said he. At which, he took them through the first gate into the kingdom and then up the steep hill to where the castle towered over them.

They were some distance from it when in some sudden passion, the woodman shifted hastily behind a cottage wall.

‘Alas, I know the castle well...’ And some look of worry came upon him.

‘What troubles you, woodman? Speak!’ said Winefride sharply.

‘I can journey no further with you. If they knew me, and thought me complicit in this crime, my children would be fatherless and starve. I must leave you.’

Winefride’s eyes turned wild with anger: her brow furrowed in frustration. ‘You will leave us now, when you swore your help?’

‘I have given what I can by taking you this far.’

‘You said you would help take his head! How will we pass the gate now? Woodman, I beg you, take us some other way. We will not draw attention.’

The woodman thought carefully and said, 'Why, you are holy folk. You must go to the gate and ask to use the chapel.'

'They will assign us a guard. Tell us another way.'

'They will not. Holy people are respected here.'

At this, Winefride said. 'Not so by their prince.'

The woodman went to take Winefride's hands, but she would not let him. 'Winefride please, I support your cause but cannot risk this endeavour. Pray, take my axe.'

'You fool! We shall not pass that gate with an axe!'

At this, Beuno spoke: 'Here, woodman. Let me have your axe.' And he reached an arm to take it.

'Old man, I mean you take no offense, but my axe is heavy and you have struggled this journey.'

'Pray, God has given me strength and so I will do it.'

'We cannot conceal it, uncle.'

'We can, Winefride. I will hold the blade upward, so it will resemble a crutch.' And he took the woodman's axe with ease as though it were a mere twig, while the woodman let forth a sigh. 'Winefride, please,' he said, but she would not look at him.

'Cease your whimpering, woodman, and be gone. She wants no further conversation with you,' Beuno said.

'Very well,' he said sorrowfully. 'I will depart. I bid you good fortune.'

And so, he left and Beuno arranged the axe as planned, with the blade upward, covered by his sleeve.

They made way for the castle gate and Winefride approached the guard on watch. 'We are simple holy folk who desire to pray this eve. Please, grant us passage to your chapel.'

'You will find one fine enough in the town,' replied the guard.

Winefride's face lowered. 'If we had but known, I would not have let my uncle tread uphill so painfully - he is old and grows weary.' Then she neared him and whispered, 'Please sir, he will not reach the hill's end now and would want prayer before he is gone.'

The guard, touched by Winefride's tale and not blind to her beauty, reluctantly granted them passage. Before she entered, he stopped her and said, 'Speak a prayer for you, fair maiden, and speak one for me too'. To this she nodded and thanked the kind sir, before following her limping uncle across the courtyard. Thus, it was that they entered the chapel- and oh was it a fine thing. Its walls were dressed in jesters' colours; its pillars polished so they gleamed.

Beuno had taken just a slight step forward when a distant clanking sounded, echoing through the passageways.

'What is this? Perhaps they come to find us!' Beuno faltered. 'That guard may have suspected us.'

'Hush uncle. That could not be so.'

The clanking grew louder, and too the steps of an arms guard.

'Make haste!' Beuno cried, noticing a small doorway at the back of the chapel.

They hurried to it and closed the door, allowing but a narrow gap. Then the noise ceased, and from the gap, they watched the chapel doors swing open. Prince Caradoc entered, and with a voice which made Winefride's blood run cool said, 'Leave me to pray.'

'And close the doors. Mine and God's time is ours alone.' He said, making Winefride redden with an ill-felt passion. The guards closed the door, leaving the prince alone.

Beuno watched Winefride's dark eyes widen with greed as Caradoc passed the doorway, muttering to himself, 'If these whispers do not desist, then to rule I will be deemed unfit.'

His back now turned from them, he knelt at the altar, pressing his hands together and began his prayer. 'Lord to a Lord, pray, have mercy on your Prince! Cease these whispers; I will do all your will commands.'

And it was then he heard a noise.

'Is someone there?' He called into the deep shadows of the chapel. No reply came, so he continued to pray.

The noise which stirred him had been Winefride trying to leave the doorway so she might go and get her head.

'Winefride, have patience. We will have his head in good time.'

'How, uncle?'

'Hear. We must have you quietly leave this place, axe in hand, and hide behind the pillars of the nave. You must hide when he stirs and move silently when he looks away.'

'What of you, uncle? What if he calls for his guards?'

'Worry not. I will hold the doors.'

'Uncle... his men are strong, stronger than thee.'

'Yet they are not stronger than God.'

So, the plan was agreed. Winefride left the doorway, concealing herself behind the first pillar. Then, it was as her uncle said: she moved as Caradoc prayed, and hid when he stirred. As he closed his prayer, Winefride knew she must act. So, after she and Beuno exchanged a

knowing nod, she stood behind Caradoc. But he heard her. He looked up and saw her, his face flushing in alarm and narrowing in intrigue.

‘Fairest maiden, you should not be here,’ he said, concerned she heard his prayer.

‘You remember me not?’ Winefride said.

‘I cannot say I-’ and then he saw the scarf upon her neck, her golden hair and those eyes once kind, now cursed with anger.

‘Winefride the Godly!’ he cried, and a sweat broke upon his brow. ‘What force has had you defy death? Why have you come hither?’

She brought out the axe which before now had been concealed beneath her skirts and said, ‘I am here for your head.’

And as she knew he would, Caradoc called to his men, who tried mightily to open the doors to save their prince. But they could not, for Beuno’s Godly strength prevented them.

Winefride, equally bestowed with God’s strength, raised the axe above Caradoc’s head. The blade glistened with the reflection of Christ himself, and Caradoc cowered helplessly on the floor, under Winefride’s wild and watchful eyes.

‘Have mercy!’ he cried, raising a hand to shield himself.

‘This is my mercy,’ she said, and she brought down the axe with bestial force, cutting joyously through his neck, and letting his head roll forth. And though the deed was done, more guards had been called, and Beuno could no longer hold the door. Caradoc’s men forced their entry, casting Beuno to the wall. They stopped short when they found the maiden, axe in hand, standing over their dead prince.

‘What is this treason, maiden!’ cried one.

‘Who placed that axe in thy hand?’ demanded another.

Winefride turned and said, ‘Only I, for it was I who killed your prince.’

‘You will have your head taken for this!’ one said, and Winefride smiled to herself.

‘You shall be better for his death,’ she said, dropping the axe so that it landed at Caradoc’s head. They ran to seize her when the ground began to tremble.

For on hearing this exchange, Beuno had collapsed into prayer, concealed by the open chapel door. With his words, the ground had started to shudder, and a crack broke across the stones. Caradoc’s head shifted slightly, and the guards charged forward; but as they did so they were pulled into the ground beneath them and consumed. Prince Caradoc’s remains followed, and Winefride smiled as his woeful head faced hers, falling into darkness. She reclaimed the axe from the ground and threw it in after him. Then, the ground closed, leaving only herself and Beuno in the chapel.

And by some miracle, the castle still slept.

PART V

Winefride and Beuno rowed when they returned: Winefride was not satisfied with one head, and Beuno thought her senseless with greed. Now, the spring which had burst forth when Winefride’s head had fallen had grown into a deep well. A stone wall was being built around it, and it was on this wall Winefride stood when, in her passion, she lost her footing and fell into its waters. Her scream hung heavily in the air, and in an attempt to save her, Beuno too lost his step and plunged into the icy water.

At this moment, Helena- Beuno's maid, discovered his fallen crucifix, and refastened it to his wall. And thence, the two emerged from the water, healed of all their ills and evils, blessed to forget their misdeeds. Winefride's scar was now but a thin silver line, and her mind was no longer ruled by revenge. She was betrothed again to God and lives on in mind and memory as the patron saint of North Wales.

In ruins rests Hawarden's fort,

Crushed to dust its stones

Beneath which lies its young dead prince,

Now dust and broken bones

To remind thou if thou takest a head,

Thou should be sure to wind up dead

And heed the Holy Winefride.