

The Abbey at Waltham

It was late in the evening, well after vespers, and the church was empty. Dressed only in linen trousers and a linen shirt worn loose and not fastened with a belt, the man knelt at the crossing, facing the altar. His head hung forward and his unkempt hair fell over his face. He clutched both hands together and mumbled a prayer to himself. Candles were dotted around the nave, the transepts, the ambulatory, and of course on the altar itself, but they were not sufficient to light all of the building.

He wanted it that way.

So much of this year had sped at such a pace, the days becoming blurred to his mind's eye as he worked to consolidate everything that he had so far gained. It had seemed like a dream, the realisation of long held ambition, the desire of his father now dead these thirteen years. He had not expected success to weigh so heavy upon his shoulders.

Was he right to take the crown from the dead king's hand?

Did he act only for his own advantage?

Would God forgive him?

Had God cursed him in response to the pope's excommunication for breaking an oath made over holy relics?

Did Guillaume of Normandy have the just and sacred claim to the crown of King Edward?

Would God forgive him?

So many questions and as yet no answers, so he prayed here at Waltham Abbey as a pressed man under the weight of the world might do so. He prayed as he had done as a child when his father had brought him to visit the Holy Rood, the black stone cross of Theign Tovi the Proud, kept here at Waltham. Then he had been an innocent, the second of six sons born to Eorl Godwin. What did it matter if he was prone to paralysis when so young, Eorl Godwin had a first born; Sweyn. Only Sweyn was not quite right, as people had said then.

Mayhap their father had foreseen the fate of his eldest son, my brother?

Mayhap that is why he had brought me, then so young, his second chance of success in the long game of intrigue that he played at court, to be blessed at Waltham by touching the Holy Rood?

He had touched the black crucifix and he had been blessed as a result. The sickly boy had grown into a strong and vibrant man, hale and hearty. Where Sweyn brought shame Harold brought honour. When Eorl Godwin looked to advance the fortunes of his house it was to Harold first that he entrusted his enterprises. It was always Harold that he expected to be the one to succeed and he had succeeded.

Before the alter of the church at Waltham King Harold of England wore no crown because there was only one king deserving of that honour to his mind and he wore a diadem of thorns. He knelt before Jesus Christ in willing and fervent supplication.

He surrendered himself to judgement.

If he had sinned so grievously then it must have been in the last nine months he believed. He began to trace his actions backwards, thinking hard about when and where he might have transgressed. Almost inevitably he thought of the early morning ride in January, some nine months ago.

The moon had been waxing crescent, barely half illuminated but still able to cast a delicate silver light onto the frosted earth below. The sky was clear and ablaze with stars. The horsemen appreciated that light as they wound their way through the narrow streets of London heading west to the gate by the river. They could not risk travelling at pace within the dark and shadowy confines of the city, too great a chance for mishap with so little light to ride by. Nevertheless they still possessed an air of urgency, an excitement picked up by their horses that strained at their rider's control as if already relishing the opportunity to stretch their legs on the journey to come.

The riders would have made an impressive sight at a more sociable hour of the day. Fine woollen cloaks with woven edges were draped over their shoulders, held in place with gold and silver broaches decorated with rubies and sapphires. Gold adorned swords held in finely crafted scabbards hung from leather belts fastened at their waists, tightened over expensive thick woollen tunics of the finest weave. Circlets of gold held their washed and combed shoulder length hair in place. Amongst their number there rode a man carrying a spear lodged into his stirrup onto which was fixed a pennant decorated with the Wyvern of Wessex. The animal reared up and held forth a foot armed with talons as if prepared to strike out at the world.

The watchmen by the western gate heard the approach of the horses long before they could see the riders, the fitful glare of their torches barely reached a few feet into the gloom. They came to attention more out of curiosity than alarm, their spears held casually in their hands as they peered into the darkness. The warmth of their brazier held them close to their post, however, for their breath misted in the cold night air and although their cloaks were woven with thick wool they still felt the touch of winter upon their shoulders.

"Open the gate," a voice commanded from the shadow with a tone used both to exercising authority and to being obeyed.

"It's the eorl! Quick, open the gate for the eorl."

The watchmen rushed to their task, removing the great wooden bar and swinging the thick gates outwards. With surprise they watched the nobleman and his party exit the city and disappear into the night, beyond the safety of the Roman walls. It was not normal for anyone

to be abroad at this hour, least of all the most powerful man in the country after the king himself.

“The morn will break with a king’s death and an eorl holding the crown I reckon,” one of the watchmen pondered.

His fellows nodded their agreement. They would talk more upon it after they had swung the gates shut and returned to the comfort of their fire again.

The hard earth slipped beneath the horses with a blur, the animals’ hooves thudding into the hard frozen dirt with the hot rhythm of the life that coursed through their powerful bodies. The party rode a beaten path westwards but could not allow their steeds to gallop at full speed due to the heavy frost and the poor light. Nevertheless, there was a spirit of exuberance to the group after leaving behind the confining walls of London and all the cares and demands that the city made upon the rich and powerful. To their left lay the great River Thames, glittering with a silver sheen under the naked moon, snaking eastwards out to the sea. It meandered to the great whale-road across which their ancestors had sailed so many generations ago. Before them and somewhat also to the left they could make out in the moonlight the dark bulk of the handcrafted stones of Westminster Abbey, begun in a religious fervour and now some twenty years old and still incomplete. It had become a familiar sight to them all as even in its unfinished state it dominated the landscape west of the city.

They closed upon the abbey with every heartbeat, the chill air abrading the skin on their faces and burning in their lungs. As they rode a barn owl appeared out of the night sky heading obliquely in the same direction as the riders. Its silent appearance unnerved more than one of the riders as it closed in slowly from their right. The starlight gave the bird’s face and body a ghostly radiance made all the more unearthly by its total silence in flight. It did not reveal whether it noticed them or not, which only added to its eerie appearance. Free to ride the airway instead of being bound to the road the owl passed over the heads of the noblemen and their several retainers and flew on towards the king’s palace at Westminster. More than one of the travellers tried to follow the line of its flight as it disappeared into the dark, wondering mayhap if it would come to rest on top of the palace roof. There were many who said that death visited the house upon which an owl chose to perch.

They had to travel a little over two miles and their horses were of a good stock. It was exhilarating to ride at speed with the cold night air breathing through their hair, their fine cloaks whipped back by the wind, the rhythmic pounding of the hooves on the hard packed earth, and the countryside laid out before them free and unbounded beneath the starry canopy. If anything the journey from London to Thorney Island was not long enough to allow them the full enjoyment of this unexpected moment in which each and every one of them felt alive. Too soon they reached the confines of the abbey and had to reign in their horses. Once more

they were in the company of the watchmen and the purpose of their moonlit flight was brought home to them again.

A king will die.

A king did die, but not by the hand of Harold of Wessex.

His sister, Queen Edith, had been on hand to receive them at the Palace of Westminster, relieved that her messenger had been able to rouse three of her brothers at least at this dark hour. Also present had been Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury, Ealdred, Archbishop of York, and Leofric, the Abbot of St. Peter's Burgh. The three clergymen had been keeping a bitter watch over many nights as the vitality of King Edward ebbed away and brought him nearer to the Kingdom of Heaven. There had been no time to formally acknowledge the holy men, however, it was allowed that the crisis facing the country excused their lack of etiquette.

"What news?" Harold Godwinson asked as he approached his sister, removing the gloves that had protected his hands from the chill night air during their ride.

She looked pale and concerned but strong nonetheless. His face was red in comparison. He closed the space between them almost penitently, aware of her pain, but his ambition burned in his eyes all the same.

"He grows ever weaker," she spoke sadly but without surrendering to any great emotion. "I fear the king will not last out this early hour."

They embraced with a genuine affection. Edith then nodded in acknowledgement to her other younger brothers, Gyrth and Leofwine, who had journeyed with Harold from London. Out of respect for their elder brother's rank, and mayhap the solemnity of the moment, they stood behind him a pace or two whilst he greeted the queen. Their retainers waited in the vestibule on the opposite side of the door through which they had entered. Three eorls travelling together would naturally be accompanied by a large party but the encounter with Queen Edith was in truth a family matter and not entirely subject to the ways of the court.

Of course Edith was all too aware of what most occupied Harold's mind, she was a Godwin too, but at least he had the strength of character to act with due consideration towards her. It somehow seemed important that Harold did not function solely upon his life's ambition and at this painful time she valued the brotherly love that was expressed in his thoughtfulness.

"He has ailed since December last. Even the consecration of the abbey here at Westminster could not rouse his spirits," Gyrth commented.

He spoke out of a genuine kindness towards his sister; they all knew how grave the king's health was. Of her five surviving brothers Gyrth was most alike to Harold in his treatment of others, softened also mayhap by a lack of the ambition that drove the senior Godwin.

"The Psalm Ninety tells us our allotted time on this Earth is three score years and ten, King Edward would not be the first man to fail to reach that total but he has come very close to it," Gyrth added.

"I wish that he had seen the consecration of his abbey," Queen Edith declared with some feeling now. Although the arrival of her brothers had brought her some moral support it had also awakened in her other conflicting emotions. "It is a work that will carve his name in history."

"You care for such a legacy from such a king?" Leofwine asked derisively.

"He is still my husband." A note of anger entered her voice as she shot her youngest brother present a challenging look.

Edith felt that her life was also slipping away, not the vibrancy that beat within her heart but the one she had known as Queen of England. She understood without consciously thinking about it that the death of Edward would change everything in respect of herself; not only would she lose a husband but also all the power that she had wielded through him. It seemed that even before the last breath had left his body there were already those keen to sully his legacy. She felt very defensive, determined to keep his reputation sacrosanct. Not for the first time Harold wished that Leofwine could learn to be more tactful.

"So much grace has fallen upon our house as a result of my union to King Edward, despite the character of several of my brothers!"

The last was added with some spite. She knew that many a man secretly mocked the piety of her husband, just as she was aware that two of their brethren, not present at least, were widely held as infamous for having far from pious characters of their own.

"This is neither the time nor the place to bring such matters before the light," Harold intervened. "What was done in the past will remain in the past. Have I not worked long and hard to reconcile the House of Godwin with King Edward?"

"And yet he still does not trust thee," Leofwine observed.

"King Edward has reigned long in difficult times; our own father did not always work to ease his government," Gyrth reminded them all but siding with his elder brother and sister against the younger sibling.

"Not when so doing favoured the prospects of our house," Leofwine countered.

"Must you always see the ill in every situation?" Harold demanded in an exasperated tone.

It seemed to him that Tostig had had too great an influence over Leofwine, certainly that kind of cynicism was a trademark of his brother's policy at court when he had enjoyed a position of power within the kingdom.

"King Edward was a weak monarch who disdained the Witan and favoured Norman advisors, giving them high positions and royal favours. In truth I prefer your conciliation brother over father's confrontation, it has brought you that much nearer to success and I would see you successful," Leofwine insisted feelingly and with the energy that often prompted him to act hastily. "That Westminster Abbey will outlive us all in King Edward's name I do not doubt, and it will mark this city out from any other in any country we know of

let alone England, but the king's obsession with religion also reveals his failure to minister his kingdom; we have no heir."

Queen Edith looked away from her brothers, feeling again some guilt in the matter that concerned the whole kingdom now as the king lay upon his deathbed. She had heard this speech so many times before and yet it still left her feeling frustrated because there was nothing that she could do about the situation. Many a mind was already made up on the subject and would not listen to the truth; that she and Edward had longed for a child and heir. Whilst Edward could accept their failing as God's will she was not so inclined, her desire to be a mother still ached deep within her even though the best years for motherhood had passed her by. It contested with her own religious feelings too, spurred on by the knowledge that most of her brothers enjoyed many children of their own. She did not resent them their families; she wished only to share in such happiness. It was, after all, a happiness that would relieve the kingdom of the fateful question of succession.

"The death of Edward Aetheling, the king's named heir, some nine years ago has brought us to this crisis," Archbishop Ealdred intervened as if recognising the queen's discomfort. He approached the children of Godwin respectfully as he spoke. "That the king and queen were not blessed with children is a blame that should be levelled at neither one nor the other; it is as God willed it."

Leofwine looked as if would counter the clergyman's predictable words but Harold chose to deny him the opportunity.

"There is still time to settle this matter in the best interest of the kingdom," he insisted.

"And yet even as we stand upon the precipice salvation is at hand," Edith told them, following her brother's lead. "During the days of his illness the king has spoken of you Harold, when the malaise allowed it of him. He does not, as some have put abroad, despise the safety of his kingdom in favour of the Kingdom of Heaven. Rather, he would see it left in secure hands, guided by a strong man of proven worth."

She gripped his forearm in her earnestness, looking directly into his face. It seemed important to her to return the support that he had shown her so often of late even though the misery of widowhood was about to break upon her.

"Does the king have yet the strength to state this before witnesses?" Stigand asked eagerly. All the clergymen had now joined the group.

"The hour grows late. If the king's final moment comes then witnesses of the best quality stand all around us and the Witan can be convened at a moment's notice," Edith replied. It was mayhap the last time that she could have a hand in the concerns of the court and she took a degree of solace from that fact. She could still play the queen before she became the widow. "I tell thee again, my husband, King Edward, would leave this life knowing that England and

all that he values in it were left safe and secure. I know that this is what lies in his heart; that this is his will.”

“My Lady!” A servant entered the room through the door the queen had used earlier. He was recognised as an attendant upon the king himself, a trusted man. “My Lord, the King, calls for thee.”

The eoldermen and clergy all glanced at one another in silence. The moment that they had waited so many long days for had now apparently come upon them; their hesitation spoke of its weight. Without another word they all passed as a sombre procession down through the dark corridors and towards the royal bedchamber.

They entered a room that was lost to shadow. Around the head of the bed a number of candles were arranged casting their light onto the white bedclothes. It seemed on first viewing that the stately bed was an island of light in a pool of darkness, the fine hangings on the wooden walls, the expensive furniture, all the finer points of the room itself remaining untouched by the flickering candle light and, therefore, known only to those who had seen the chamber previously when it was better lit.

King Edward lay upon his bed looking old and weak. His eyes moved constantly around the room but never seemed to settle on any one point. His hair had always been fair but now it was white as if totally drained of life as much as of colour.

“My Lord, I come.” Queen Edith spoke out to him with a voice edged with emotion.

She advanced quickly to his side, her footsteps silenced by the hides that covered the wooden floorboards around the king’s bed. She took his hand up in hers to reassure him, noting how cold it was to the touch, and brought her face down to a level where he could see her more easily.

“So is my time I believe.” Edward’s voice was weak but he spoke clearly. His eyes fastened upon her face and he managed a sad smile. “The crown slips from my head I think and you will be my queen no more.”

He glanced to where the crown rested on a stand beside his bed and then returned his tired eyes to Edith.

“I will live out the rest of my days as your queen My Lord, and only ever yours,” she answered him passionately and squeezed his hand tenderly.

Tears welled at the corner of her eyes but she remained in control of her visible emotions and her vision was transfixed upon his wan face.

“Is the Eorl of Wessex here?” Edward asked with some determination.

“My Lord!”

Harold stepped forward and took up a position on the opposite side of the bed to Edith. He knelt down like his sister, a gesture of both respect and consideration that would allow Edward to look him in the eye also.

No one else in the room moved. Only two people had a right to be in the immediate presence of King Edward at this moment in time, the rest remained on the edge of the pool of light understanding that their moment to step forward would be upon them soon.

“My Lord of Wessex, I have loved your sister as my wife and queen,” his tired eyes settled on Edith again, another quick smile before flitting back to Harold. “This woman and all the kingdom I commend to thy charge.”

Harold glanced at his sister. A surge of excitement threatened to overwhelm him but his own sense of propriety battled against it. When he saw the tears now course down her cheek freely the inappropriate sense of celebration abated quickly. He looked back at the king.

Edward lay propped up on many pillows as he lacked the strength to sit up by himself. His head had been turned towards Harold Godwinson but now it had settled into a more central position, his eyes fixed upon a space between the queen and the earl, sister and brother. Those eyes were now without life.

“And so passes the reign of King Edward,” Stigand commented before all three clergymen began to mutter a prayer in Latin.

“King Edward began the work on his abbey by the sanction of the pope because he could not keep his vow to visit Rome. I will honour that work by being crowned within it,” Harold spoke quietly but surely.

“Dependent upon the Witan,” Gyrth reminded him.

“Dependent upon the Witan,” Harold agreed, “although they have no other claim to consider.”

But they did!

Guillaume of Normandy claimed the throne by right of being a cousin to King Edward, asserting also that the Saxon king had told him that he was the preferred choice following the death of his named heir Edward Aetheling in 1057.

But why should a foreigner rule over the English?

No one in England believed the words of the Norman duke. The witan had made its choice and voted for Harold of Wessex to make safe the throne and the country. He had undertaken that task with vigour and in this, the ninth month of his reign, he had so far succeeded.

Where was the sin that has brought down this judgement from God upon me?

Ealdgyth Swannesha?

Ealdgyth the gentle swan. My beautiful Ealdgyth.

A woman so virtuous, so beloved of the people of Wessex; how could a woman such as she house a sin great enough to curse a king? They had been handfasted for some twenty years and she had given him five healthy children. He loved her even though the church did not recognise her as his lawful wife and yet he loved the church as well.

The sin was not hers, it was his. He had put her aside after taking the crown. Archbishop Stigand had given him a reason, to marry in church and have the union blessed by God Almighty. Ealdgyth of Mercia had given him the opportunity, an accord that would join the fractious houses of Wessex and Mercia, making relatives of the young eorls Edwin and Morcar. Ealdgyth of Mercia was now Queen of England, not the Ealdgyth who was the gentle swan of Wessex. The motive was political; the marriage was blessed by both the clergy and by God, or so it seemed as his new wife was pregnant.

Was the betrayal of Ealdgyth Swannesha's love the sin that cursed this king?

In the gloom of the church Harold Godwinson, former husband to Ealdgyth of Wessex, raised his arms, each hand pointing down a transept; one north, one south. His head came up also and he looked towards the altar; looked eastwards towards the apse. He had paid for the church at Waltham to be rebuilt in stone, dedicated only six years ago. He had been generous in his endowments.

Could all the good works of a pious man be undone by one small sin compelled by circumstance, enacted in consideration of the welfare of others? Or had he always desired the throne too much? Had he sacrificed a good woman like Ealdgyth Swannesha to his ambition just as Tostig claimed he had sacrificed him, his own brother, to that same ambition? Was this the nature of his sin? Had Eorl Godwin cursed all of his kin through his hunger for power and his dream of seeing a Godwin sit upon the throne of England?

How could a son atone for a father when all he had done was honour and obey him?

The moment of judgement had come. In one scale he would deposit all that he had done to make the kingdom safe, in the other the sin as he understood it. He would let God decide now.

Several days ago he had fallen ill at Westminster. The healers were mystified but Harold had recognised the symptoms; his childhood illness had returned. The healers could do nothing for him, only God could cure him once again. God must lay hands upon him but he would not do that for a sinful man.

I repent all sins! I ask only for what I deserve!

He closed his eyes and prayed once more, his arms still outstretched. How long he prayed for he did not know nor care. His prayers seemed to come to a natural end and he found that his eyes opened of their own accord. His arms should have ached having been held aloft for so long but they did not. He clasped his hands together in front of him and said a silent 'amen!'

Slowly, as if testing the validity of his belief in the judgement received, Harold climbed to his feet. He took in a deep breath and felt the vitality of forty years of life course through his body. A joy rose within his breast that was difficult to contain but he mastered himself. He would not profane the church or the holy gift given to him here by acting without humility. He wept instead.

“We should not have come,” Half-foot complained, “time is pressing and there is little that can be achieved here.”

“You think only of the court,” Father Egric accused him in his mild tone.

“I have employment there, here I am...well, I wait upon my lord’s whim,” the courtier retorted with a scowl.

“We could find you employment here if you wish, you are a man who can both read and write; a skill rare to find outside of the clergy.” The priest smiled benignly.

“I am both grateful for my learning and for being outside of the clergy,” Half-foot told him. “I have no wish to come any closer to your religion than my office brings me.”

“Where does this ill-will come from my friend?” Father Egric kept his tone calm despite the other’s hostility.

“I’m sorry Father. I wish you no ill in truth. I am just sore today,” Half-foot apologised.

“Your foot pains you? We have skills in the healing arts, mayhap if you let me have a look at it?” He looked down at the other man’s left leg as he spoke.

Half-foot was dressed like any other Saxon; except that his clothes were of very good quality and that his left leg and foot were somewhat different in shape. Beneath his linen trousers a piece of wood shaped to the contours of the back of his leg was strapped against the limb with leather fastenings. It was positioned beneath his knee and stretched down under the arch of the foot, which was quite pronounced. Although his trouser leg covered this support his fine leather shoes could not hide the twisted nature of the foot itself. His clawed toes pointed inwards to a marked degree and his normal stance reflected his tendency to use the outside edge of the foot almost exclusively.

To help with his balance he used a staff made from oak and decorated with carvings and inlaid with gold and silver. The craftsmanship was exquisite, taking pagan symbols for its theme. It had become something of a badge of Half-foot’s office at the court of the King of England but then it had been given to him in lieu of a sword by Harold Godwinson himself when he had been the Eorl of Wessex.

“I thank you for your concern Father but I doubt that there is anything that your skill can achieve with my foot,” Half-foot told him sincerely and took a precautionary step backwards.

“God gives us all our burdens to bear,” the priest told him in an apologetic tone.

“Your god may.” He noticed a flicker of resentment cross Father Egric’s face and felt a moment of satisfaction. However he knew that he was only present at the church because his own master had commanded it. “Come Father, we have touched upon this before and it would make me an ill mannered guest to insult your hospitality by doing so again; you know my feelings on the subject.”

"It pains me to see you so wilfully rejecting God's love," the priest smiled benignly. "There is much that the church can give you."

"Except an answer as to why I was born with this?" Half-foot pushed his left leg forward.

"God moves in mysterious ways," the priest told him with an odd tilt of his head that Half-foot found surprisingly patronising. "There is a purpose in everything that He does. Your lameness is a reminder to us of what his son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, did with the laying on of hands. Your pain teaches us to be accepting of the ills of this world in preparation of the joys awaiting us in God's Kingdom."

"Why am I put on this middle-earth to illustrate your god's lessons? Why doesn't your god choose one of his own believers?" Half-foot retorted with a degree of heat.

"We have the ability to choose for ourselves good sir, without it there would be no meaning to choosing God over the Devil. Although you may feel that he has taken something from you, you must remember also that he has given you other gifts with which to make your life somewhat easier," the priest adopted a placatory tone.

"He has given me other gifts?" The courtier sounded disbelieving.

"You have your mind, which so far exceeds others," Father Egric pointed out.

"I would rather hold a spear than a quill, but I am too lame on this side to make a warrior," Half-foot told him, indicating the left side of his body.

"A life of violence is no life at all. It brings only misery and destruction."

"Death is our final destruction and it will find us in any place where wyrd has thought fit to fix our final moment. For some, death upon a battlefield is a fine place, for others their beds will do."

Half-foot limped over to a trestle table and sat down at the accompanying bench, sighing as the soreness in his foot was relieved somewhat.

"I find you exasperating," Father Egric told him. "You are a learned man and yet you yearn to don armour and carry a spear like so many other loutish brutes. You dream of spilling blood and ending lives, putting homes to the torch and leaving only ruin behind you. With all that you know can you not think of greater things to turn your heart too?"

"I would be a man Father," Half-foot snapped. "In this world such as I do not thrive; are not meant to thrive. Of what use above a slave does a man who cannot wield a spear have?"

"Within the church no man wields a spear and your wyrd does not hold sway. And you do thrive, Half-foot, you do very well indeed."

"All by my own effort and not by the will of any god, that I know. At least my lord the king values my learning and is wise enough to know how to use me to his best advantage."

"The worldly trappings of the court hold you so tightly?" Father Egric asked with a disdainful look.

“At court the eoldermen mark me, they show me due respect. Even without a spear I am someone in the court of King Harold. I have made myself someone.”

“Indeed you have but the court, like all things temporal, will pass.”

“And I with it, I have no doubt, but in the meantime I am not the village cripple dependent upon alms. I am the king’s secretary,” Half-foot spoke this last with pride.

“I see that you are determined to live in your world and will not crossover to consider our spiritual life, for the moment then I will let you be. Your master has been good to this abbey and, as always, our hospitality extends to you without resentment,” Father Egric spoke in his turn with sincerity.

“Then please understand that when I say that I wish King Harold a speedy recovery it is not without gratitude for all that you have done for him,” Half-foot responded in a more conciliatory fashion. “I take it as a good sign that he wishes now to spend some time with his queen; that is, that he is indeed on the road to recovery and that his recent illness is now passing?”

“In that we all thank God for his merciful intervention,” Father Egric was determined to achieve the last word on the subject.

“The king comes,” Half-foot said.