

A Roman Spring by Rich Norman

The Pax Romana is considered by many, and perhaps rightly so, to be one of Mankind's highest social achievements. Nothing could be less impressive. For a few centuries spanning 27 B.C. until A.D. 180, ancient Rome used its powers of charm and persuasion, such as the threat of crucifixion, slavery and murder, to subdue the world into peaceful obedience, and bestowed the pax, the "kiss of peace" to those under its dominion. The Pax Romana teaches: Mankind can find peace, but, only under the heel of a sadist's boot. Such is the hope of the Pax Romana. Generally speaking, with the notable exception of our small, fragile and nearly extinct experiment in democratic stewardship, history makes this achievement out to be as impressive as any of the wonders of the world, which were also in the main built upon the backs of slave labor. Indeed, the Roman of ancient times is just as familiar to us geopolitically and socially as a member of the family, and I contest we are the rightful heirs of this dubious honor, this "kiss of peace." We are the new Romans, and until about six years ago, I was training up to be the head centurion.

My father was the singular most impressive man I have ever known. He was at once charming, and then, utterly ferocious, and could bring tears to the eyes of used car salesmen. His was a Roman charm, to be sure: golden, warm and cruel, with no hint of the sea change, only sunny weather with a sudden whipping storm that appeared as lightning and shattered every mast, left every boat adrift without wind or an ore, now crushed...ripe for the plucking. He knew: all were to be charmed and befriended, or hurt and broken, and only then, once made soft before his will, only then, was threat turned to profit, chance harnessed and peace brought forth under the weight of his heel. A self-made business man who risked, borrowed millions he did not have...and won...he gave me his strength, his insecurity and relentless rage, his mistrust and constant fear. For these things are what a man needs to remember, remember not to trust but to be ready instead—ready with a smile in one hand and a fist in the next. So does every Roman know of fear, and of peace. So does every new Roman know of the world, and fear, of his son. As Cronus did fear Jupiter, The Father is sure of but one thing, that he and he alone, is, and must always be...over the son.

It was six years ago that I broke completely, and understood the unbelievable fact, that everything I had been taught, although true, was utterly mistaken...just dead wrong. What I believed was strength was sapping me of my health and was not strength—it was hate. Hate is not the opposite of love, far from it, in fact, science has informed us that a particular series of neural structures which conjunctly are referred to as the ascending activating system, supply the undifferentiated energy, which I have inferred, powers both seemingly opposite emotions. One may use the limited supply of energy in whatever way one wishes, either as a source to power our hatred, or, to bind and create, rather than fear and dominate. We may be as lovers to our world, or, pose over it as a Roman with our blade raised, and our "peace" laid bare. Trembling and afraid is the world to be under such a peace as this! Ah! Japan and China are to fight over some ugly rocks strewn across the desolate sea, the entire economy is based on counterfeit money and will soon collapse, the holy Middle East is ripe to bursting, its belly alive with snakes and serpents in need of a Roman boot! And so we see the achievement, the Pax Romana, and wonder

if it was not a blessing. For what of this world and this horror, is there no way out from this winter hell? This world of man is as a cup of hot sand to me now, my hatred and my disgust rise up and I am choking in this desert heat, choking on this dry winter hell, the peace of Man's scorched hatred, his peace born under the sign of mutual threat, hatred and fear! Ah! But for rain...but for hope...but for Spring!

In every age there has been a place, a place to escape the horror of the world of man, just as there is now. Even the Pax Romana can not find us here, here in our Valley, here hiding quietly, sipping upon the ice blue sky and pure chill air, so clear and cold, a whisper and a hint of what is to come, a taste of rose and heat—of Spring. And it seems, that if I call to him, perhaps, at last, he may hear me:

Here, father, please, come here... I must show you what I have found, please do not look at me that way, oh please, not today. Please father, soften your heart, come here and let me show you...let me show you, there is another way, a way we can stop the pain, stop the hate and fear. Oh how I love you, and need to show you...I have found another way. Oh father, there is another way to live, a way to find peace without hatred, here in the quiet still of this forest, oh how I do love you, and need you to trust me, and look! Look! Here under this tree where the shadows sweep up against noon, here, here in this Valley we may stop the pain and discover, the season and storm have past. Oh father please do not look at me that way...not today, not here in this perfect place, not here...here...I have something for you—you may rest alongside me and know of silence, still and peace. At last I have found a perfect place, a perfect moment filled with trust, ripe and tender, as a sweet hint of grass spilled into the chill morning air, a new prayer, soft and delicate, stretches between and around us, a new tenderness, bashful and sad, fresh with lost hope, rises up. Unaframed and tender is a child's hope, so impossible and real, so tender and unaframed, as a candle before the breath of eternity, as trust, as a new season, as rain before my parched and bruised heart. Oh father can you taste the new air?—Can you ease your pain and your heat, oh father can you forgive me for knowing, can you taste the wind and feel it too—can you taste the air, so bright and clean? So unsullied and bright is this air, so fresh and clean, unstained with fear and hate, pure and perfect in every way is this life and this world! Oh father, please do not look at me that way...not today, not here amongst this perfect moment...for a new world is born unto us, and we might know of the world and ourselves yet again to discover: Here in our perfect Valley, we have found the hope of mankind, the grace of every happiness and health, here in our Valley we have the truth, and all of hope—here we have the answer to our mad world, here, I have found, our very first season—At last, I have found, our "Roman Spring."

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