



LEGENDS OF MANNEKEN-PIS

THE SAVIOUR OF THE CITY

A very long time ago, enemy troops tried to take control of Brussels. However, a strong wall prevented them from entering the city. Therefore, the enemies decided to lay siege to the city by blocking all the entry and exit points. The siege lasted for ages without any sign of the city's inhabitants surrendering. Therefore, the enemies devised a trick. They pretended to leave and took advantage of the inhabitants' distraction to light a fuse connected to a barrel of gunpowder. That way they could blow up the wall and enter the city unimpeded! As the residents of Brussels, believing that they had been saved from their enemies, were celebrating, a young boy was taking a walk near the wall. He was surprised to see a burning fuse drawing dangerously close to the gunpowder. Despite his tender years, he understood the danger at once. What should he do? He had no water to douse the flame. Therefore, without a second thought, he decided to... pee on the fuse, which went out. That is how the young boy saved Brussels.

THE YOUNG DUKE GODFREY, VICTOR OF THE BATTLE OF RANSBEEK

Godfrey, the son of the Duke of Brabant, was born in 1142. His father died shortly after his birth and Godfrey became the new Duke of Brabant although he was still a baby. While waiting for him to reach adulthood, the regency of the Dukedom was entrusted to his mother, Lutgarde. Two vassals of the young Duke Godfrey deemed it to be the perfect moment to rebel against him and his mother. A battle broke out in Ransbeek, near Brussels, between the troops of the perfidious vassals and those who had chosen to remain loyal to young Godfrey. Despite his extreme youth, Godfrey was the official head of the Brabant army. Therefore, he was taken to the site of the battle in his crib, which was hung from the branch of an oak tree. With his army in great difficulty, Godfrey rose up from his crib and urinated in the direction of his enemies. This gesture bolstered his supporters who redoubled their efforts and ended up winning the battle. To commemorate the victory, a fountain was built in Brussels near a young oak tree at the corner of a street which, since then, has been called *Rue du Chêne*.

THE YOUNG BOY AND THE WITCH

Once upon a time there was an wicked witch who lived in a small house on the corner of *Rue du Chêne* and *Rue de l'Étuve*. Also nearby lived a kindly old man beloved by all. One day, a young boy, who was passing by, was overtaken by an urgent need to urinate and did so against the door of the witch's house. The evil woman, hearing a strange sound, came out of her house. She said to the child: "You have sullied my house with what you have done. Therefore, I sentence you to do the same thing for all the centuries to come". However, the young lad did not deserve such a severe punishment. What suddenly happened then? The kindly old man came by, bearing in his arms a small statue which he installed in the boy's place. And he took the young lad home to his parents. Since then, the statue continues to do what the innocent young boy had been condemned to do for all eternity if the kindly old man had not intervened.

THE YOUNG PRINCE OF BRUSSELS, WHO URINATED FOR A WHOLE HOUR

Once upon a time, there was a young prince of Brussels called Godfrey. When he was five years old, he was walking at the head of a large procession around the city. Unable to wait any longer, he had to stop at the corner of *Rue de l'Etuve* and *Rue du Chêne* to relieve his bladder. However, the young prince was only able to return to the back of the procession because it took him a full hour to relieve himself instead of the usual maximum of one minute. This event was seen as a miracle and to remember it, a statue was built on the site.

THE CURSE OF GUDULE

In 705, Saint Vindicianus, the Bishop of Arras, travelled to Brussels at the invitation of a great lord. Unable to sire children, this man asked Vindicianus to pray for him. Nine months later, his wife gave birth to a child, who, beset by an urgent call of nature, urinated so high that he splashed Vindicianus' beard.

Shortly afterwards, the christening of the newborn child took place. Gudule, a very pious noblewoman was asked to give the blessing. This devout woman was so beautiful that the lord fell deeply in love with her. Three months later, unable to resist his passion, he went to meet Gudule when she was at home alone. However, Gudule, who was not in love with him, firmly rejected his advances. Furious, the lord did not want to give up and gave chase. Hiding against a column which opened up to provide her with refuge, she said to the lord, as a punishment: "Your only child will stop growing and never stop urinating".

THE LOST... AND FOUND CHILD

Once upon a time, there was a family comprising a father, a mother and a young boy. The young boy was about three years old. One day, there was a celebration in Brussels, and the parents took their son by the hand and went out. There were many people in the streets and the young lad, who wanted to see everything, tugged so hard that he became separated from his parents and found himself alone in the crowd. Oblivious to the danger, the child had great fun while his worried parents searched high and low for him. When night fell, they had still not found him. Four days passed and their son had still not returned. On the fifth day, the father set out once again to search for him. When he reached the corner of *Rue de l'Etuve* and *Rue du Chêne*, he saw his son... having a pee. He took the child in his arms, kissed him and ran back with him to the boy's mother. Overjoyed at having found his child, the father wanted to mark the event and built the statue which today is known as *Manneken-Pis*.

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