

1953
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'Eve' Joins Turvey's 'Jonah'



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A century and more of solitude has ended at Turvey. Jonah, the venerable stone statue who for 109 years has watched the Ouse slip by, now has a companion to share his vigil. The waters will lap twenty toes in future, and in time of flood two heads will break surface to peer at the traffic rumbling over the old bridge towards Northampton.

The situation, however, is fraught with danger, for the newcomer is said to be a female. She was discovered under a wall during repair work to an ancient barn by the mill, and when she was brought into the light of day an elderly villager recalled the time some 50 years ago, when he helped bring down two statues, known as Adam and Eve, from Turvey Abbey to that self-same barn:

"Eve's" arrival has split hitherto peaceful Turvey into two fiercely opposed factions. While some rejoice that at long last a mate has been found for "good old Jonah", others shake their heads sadly as if at the passing of an epoch. To them a splendid tradition of dignified bachelordom is threatened.

At present the two principals are 40 feet apart and there has been no noticeable inclination on the part of either to lessen the gap. Nor has Jonah attempted so much as a glance at his betrothed. We cannot blame him, for Eve, although protected from the weather for so many years, is no Venus de Milo.

THE LADY HAS LARGE FEET

Nor is she all that a bridegroom might expect. She is 10ft. tall, 24 inches shorter than her companion—and her ample form is covered with a loose robe, unfashionably cut. Her legs are sturdy, as if accustomed to trudging before a plough; her feet are large and utilitarian, and the lower half of her face is covered by something suspiciously like the remnants of a beard.

A key to her true nature might be obtained from her face, but little of that is left. It is the sort of face that one imagines might exist behind the enigmatic mask of an Egyptian mummy.

Not even the Parish Council, one thinks would call her attractive. Or even feminine. Some have whispered that she is not "Eve" at all but a disreputable character called the "Tax Collector" who once looked stonily out over the Abbey grounds and frightened the crows for miles around.

But things being what they are, we (who incidentally believe in fairies and suchlike nonsense) would not be surprised if, after some soft autumn night when the moon has been weaving spells, you were to pace out the distance between the two statues you would find some difficulty in making it 40 feet.