**Brown Boots**

By Gerald O. Robilliard

Abraham Colbec, our dear neighbour, past into eternity after having walked this earth for more than ninety-eight years. Poor Abraham had been very lonely these last years. All that he had in the world as parent was a remote cousin who lived in St Sampson, Alec Gibeaux. He visited the old man once a year, on New Year’s Day.

As neighbours we had looked after old Abraham since his wife has died more than thirty years ago. Everyday we would take him his dinner, often we passed the evening with him. He was an old man well presented, polite as possible, charming and amiable.

He was well off; he had three properties and some money in the savings bank. He often said I can not make up my mind if my cousin Alec will have the money or the properties. Poor old man he had never forgiven Alec because he had been to the funeral of his wife with his brown boots.

Poor old Abraham had never seen a doctor in all of his life. He was taken with a serious heart condition one Monday morning and by the evening he was no more.

As long as I will live, I will never forget the funeral of poor old Abraham. It was at two o’clock at St Peters church. When I arrived at the church his cousin Alec arrived by taxi. I was shocked when I saw him quickly get out of that magnificent taxi. He was wearing brown boots. I said to myself is it possible, brown boots at a funeral! He walked before me along the path. there was no one person who could take their eyes from his brown boots. When we came to the church door the undertaker shook our hands, we said that we were the mourners, and he took us to our pew. The undertaker was the first up the aisle well dressed in a frock coat, black shoes and a top hat. Alec walked ahead of me, but I could not take my eyes from his brown boots. We sat in the pew and bowed our heads in prayer, I could only look at his brown boots. When the minister spoke about Abraham’s great age and the magnificent example of his character, I looked down and I could not take my eyes off his brown boots.

At the end of the service Alec and I walked slowly behind the coffin, I looked down and I saw the brown boots that came and went. When we were standing by the grave my eyes were on the brown boots, actually I did not see old Abraham disappear into the grave, I asked myself what respect he had for a poor old cousin.

When I came to leave the cemetery there was a man who tapped my on the shoulder. He had a long envelope in his hand. He told me that he was Abraham Colbec’s advocate and that it was a copy of his will which said that if his cousin Alec Gibeaux appeared with black boots or shoes he would inherit his properties, but if Alec Gibeaux appeared with brown boots or shoes his properties were given to Amos Tourgi in perpetuity.

My good people, when you go to a funeral think of poor old Abraham and don’t wear your brown boots.