

MANNERLAND

By Christopher Mackenzie Glover



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“Chew your food with your mouth closed, get your elbows off the table, eat with your fork, get your finger out of your nose and stop blowing bubbles into your milk,” Mary Riplan yelled at her 11 year-old son. “Do you think you were born in a barn or something?”

“Aw mom who cares? We’re not out in public,” Jordan griped back.

Ted, Jordan’s father chimed in, “Jordan, that is not the point. What’s going to happen when you take a girl to a restaurant someday? Do you want to embarrass yourself?”

“I hate girls anyway, they’re yucky and I would never take one out anywhere! Leave me alone! You guys don’t know what you’re talking about,” Jordan screeched loudly.

“Jordan don’t raise your voice to us. If you don’t start using your manners and treating us with respect, then you can go to bed right now,” his mother said forcefully.

“SHUT-UP!!” was Jordan’s loud and very rude reply.

With one glance at his father’s red angry face and his mother’s bulging eye stare, Jordan pushed himself away from the table and raced upstairs knowing he was in for some very creative punishment.



Jordan slammed the door behind him and flung himself on the bed. Tears started streaming down his face at the thought of his punishment. He was sure there would be no television for a month or no video games ever again. It was too horrible to think about.

Jordan wasn’t a bad kid, but he just didn’t use the manners his parents had taught him. He was quiet and sometimes shy and that was part of his problem. However, the bottom line was that his behaviour was just plain rude. That got him into trouble as people don’t like to be around those who don’t use their manners. There is only one cure for manners this terrible and it was something he could never have imagined in a million years.

Jordan nodded off to sleep on his bed with his clothes still on. All of a sudden he heard a

very deep voice speak to him, “Awaken young man, you must come with me.”

“What the...who’s there? Mom, Dad, there’s a strange person in my room.” Jordan yelled.

Although, the voice somehow calming to him.

“It’s no use,” said the voice. “They have become frozen in time until our quest is complete.”

“Quest, what are you on about?” said Jordan.

Jordan’s room then became awash in bright light and he could not see a thing. He felt himself floating off his bed and being whisked away into the bright light. That was the last thing he remembered.

Jordan awoke in a thick forest with humungous trees. He was lying in a very soft pile of moss. Suddenly from behind he heard a rustling noise and a large figure appeared blocking the sunlight. He was a huge man, about seven feet tall. He had a long grey beard that hung from his chin. He had large muscles and large round eyes that were completely black. He wore a brown cloak with large black boots.

“How are you today young sir?” said the tall man.

“Who are you and what the heck am I doing here? Tell me right now!” demanded Jordan.

“I won’t answer any of those questions unless you can tell me the magic word,” said the bearded man calmly.

“What happens if I don’t tell you this magic word old man?” snapped Jordan rudely.

“Then you’ll be sent to the Jail of the Ill Mannered on Forgive Me Island, overlooking the Cold Bay of Excuse Me,” boomed the old man. “Here you’ll be taught good manners by Mr. Snootee. Trust me, going on a simple quest with me, will be nothing compared to the manner training you’ll get from Mr. Snootee.”

Suddenly from deep in his memory bank Jordan remembered this magic word. The thought of facing someone named Mr. Snootee didn’t sound too good, “Please, oh please answer my questions sir.”

“I am Elderan, a guide for those of the real world that do not use their manners. You, Jordan Riplan, are in Mannerland, a teaching ground for those who do not use their manners. Children like you.”

Elderan continued, “The overseer decides who needs the training and I retrieve them through our time portal. I take them along the Quest Trail, where we make several stops. Each stop will require you to use different manners. Once you’ve completed these tasks you will be rewarded with the Mannerland Code of Manners. If you fail the quest, it’s off for the Mr. Snootee treatment. If that doesn’t work, you go back to your world, where your rudeness will certainly leave you with no friends or family. Come we must go.”

Jordan and Elderan set off down a narrow path surrounded by lush flowers.

“Where are we going first?” asked Jordan.

“We are going to visit Passdubudda. You must demonstrate your table manners to him. I’ve heard this isn’t a strong thing with you,” explained Elderan.

After a long tiresome walk, Jordan and Elderan emerged from the path onto a larger dirt road that stood in the middle of the forest. From here you could see a mountain at the edge of trees. If you looked closely, the mountain looked like a folded napkin.

“Jordan that is Table Manners Mountain. Just down the trail a bit is Passdubudda’s cottage. He comes from the people known as the Politees. Politees are a happy people dedicated to keeping good manners. They live in a great walled city called Politeeville which lies at the very end of the Quest Trail. Passdubudda must stay outside the great walled city because people who are very rude are unable to enter the city unless they have earned their Code of Manners. It is our highest law. This is the only way he can train children like you.”

“Are the Politees the only people in Mannerland?” asked Jordan.

“No, there are others. They call themselves the Ignorantees and they turned their backs on good manners ages ago. The Ignorantees are ruled by the evil Queen Rudian. For some reason a magical force keeps them from getting too close to Politeeville. We’re not sure what it is.” Elderan continued, “Our Great King Pardon II keeps an old book known as the Good Book. It contains all the manners from the ages. For some reason when we speak the phrases from the book, it drives the Ignorantees crazy. However, they seem to be getting braver and have made several attempts to get in the walled city and take the book. They believe that once the Good Book is gone, that over time manners may begin to disappear and rudeness will rule not only this world, but yours as well.”



Jordan and Elderan reached Passdubudda's cottage and a great jolly fat man came out.

"Come in Elderan. This must be your latest attempt at bringing a young person into the world of manners. You both look hungry after your long walk. Please come sit at my table and we'll eat," said Passdubudda.

Elderan nudged Jordan slightly, "Remember what I said about the quest."

Jordan sat down at a large table with mounds of his favourite food and instantly began to gobble down a chocolate donut with thick fudge icing.

"Wait just one minute there young man," Passdubudda said sternly. "You have broken the first rule of table manners. Never begin eating until everyone is served and your host is seated. Break two more rules in this part of your quest and it's Mr. Snootee time for you."

Jordan tried to recall the table manners his parents taught him. He knew them, he just didn't use them. "Hey Elderan, err I mean please pass the butter Elderan. Thank-you," Jordan said nicely.

"Very good Jordan! See you do know your manners; you're just too lazy to use them. Being lazy is not worth the price of people not being able to stand being around you," Passdubudda explained.

It was at this time Jordan began to eat his triple cheeseburger and Passdubudda and Elderan stared with their mouths hanging wide open. Jordan sounded like a cow eating grass.

Passdubudda warned Jordan again, "You're like a little piggy eating from his trough. Please Jordan eat with your mouth closed, I don't want to see or hear your food once it's in

your mouth.”

After this mistake Jordan put on a display of manners that made Passdubudda fall off his chair not once, but twice.

“Jordan you have passed your first test in Mannerland and I wish you luck with the rest of your tasks,” Passdubudda congratulated Jordan. Remember, if you use your manners all the time it will become second nature to you. Plus you might actually keep the friends you have and maybe even meet a nice girl someday.”

Jordan rolled his eyes at the nice girl comment and he and Elderan waved to Passdubudda as they left the cottage.

They walked towards Table Manners Mountain along the trail. A sign said, ‘Politeeville 5km Away, Have A Nice Day.’

Just then Jordan and Elderan heard a rustling in the brush nearby and two figures emerged. They were dressed in very formal old fashioned army uniforms that Jordan had only seen in history books.

“Pleezam and Thankoo how are you?” called out Elderan to the two figures.

“Fine”, the pair yelled out as they walked towards Elderan and Jordan.

“Please Elderan, tell me who these guys are?” asked Jordan.

“These two are part of the royal guard that patrol the woods and make sure Ignorantees don’t get into Politeeville.” Elderan continued, “They round up any Ignorantees that wander too far south and take them to the Jail of the Ill Mannered where they are taught manners by you know who.”

“Pleezam, Thankoo, what brings you guys so far south,” Elderan asked.

“Pleezam spoke up, “Well for some reason many Ignorantees have been spotted close to Politeeville. The Politees that live along the Quest Trail have had to flee to Politeeville. Gimmie Nevergitz, Yezir and Yezam Respekt, and Kant Halpit arrived in the city this morning. It seems the magic force is no longer keeping Ignorantees away.”

“I think it’s best we get there ourselves,” said Thankoo.

“What about Jordan? He hasn’t earned his Code of Manners; he can’t enter the walled

Elderan was cut-off from what he was saying by the sound of horse hooves coming up fast behind them.

“Up ahead, there’s some Politees, grab em,” shouted a large man on a horse riding up to them.

Out of the forest came several others on horses. Jordan guessed these were Ignorantees. They were dressed in dirty food stained clothes, and tattered shirts. On their heads they wore some kind of helmets with big padded ears. They pointed large and very sharp spears

at the Politees and Jordan.

“Well, well. What have he here?” bellowed the largest and fattest Ignorantee. “If it isn’t the famous Pleezam, Thankoo and the biggest prize, Elderan. You guys have caused us quite a bit trouble.”

Elderan replied angrily, “Big Burpa you slime. You and your foul queen will never take Mannerland. Why are you so close to Politeeville? King Pardon will surely cast his spells and drive you away.”

Big Burpa smiled smugly. “Not anymore Elderan. We figured out a way to defeat the magic that has kept us away from Politeeville all this time. It’s just a matter of time before we rule Mannerland or soon to be called the Land of Ignorance. Then we can spread bad manners to the real world.”

“Hey boss, what do we do with this brat,” shouted one of Big Burpa’s guards.

“Let me go you ugly pig. I’m rude just like you guys,” said Jordan. These dopes dragged me from my world to try and make me polite.”

“Heh, heh, a boy who really knows how to be rude. Why bother with all that manner stuff? What good does it do you anyway?” Big Burpa continued, “Come with us to the city of Ignorandom and we’ll teach you how to be really rude. We used to do it until Elderan destroyed our ability to make the portal appear. Guards, Stinky Stan and Manny Mouthpiece, tie up the others and march them to Ignorandom. Throw them in the Smelly Sock Jail. Don’t forget to put gags in their mouths so they can’t speak.”

Jordan thought it odd that when the Ignorantees spoke they were very loud. While talking they seemed to use a type of sign language with each other. They also stared very intently at your mouth when you were speaking.

Jordan rode with Big Burpa on his smelly horse, all the way to Ignorandom. Big Burpa smelled like sour milk and cheese. Jordan let out some loud farts and burps on the trip there, but never said excuse me once. Big Burpa would just turn his head from time to time, and wrinkle his nose. For some reason he didn’t seem to hear the farts. They approached the shabby looking village of Ignorandom. There was no large wall around this village, mainly because no one was trying to get in. The houses were falling apart. Dogs and cats ran wild on the dirty streets. In the centre of the city was a brown brick building that kinda looked like a castle.

Big Burpa stopped at the brown brick building and took Jordan off the horse. He was taken to a large dining hall where a scraggly looking old hag with a beat up crown was stuffing her face with food. The others were taken down some stairs with a sign at the doorway that read, ‘Smelly Sock Jail.’

“Hey there queenie, I got a surprise for you,” said Big Burpa as he removed his helmet with the big padded ears. “I got us a new recruit for the guard. This kid has some great promise. Rudest one I’ve seen in years.”

Without looking up the queen snorted back, “Yeah who cares! Get him a uniform. If he’s that bad, he won’t require any training.”

“I’ve got another surprise, even better,” gloated Big Burpa. “I’ve captured Pleezam and

Thankoo. Best of all, I captured Elderan too.”

This time Queen Rudian looked up, “As stupid as you are sometimes Big Burpa, this has to be your biggest capture ever. Did you put them in the new sound proof cell?”

“Of course, do you think I was born yesterday?” snapped Big Burpa.

Queen Rudian stared at Big Burpa and just smiled an awful crooked smile.

“Our plans to slowly take over Mannerland and destroy manners in the real world are working,” said Queen Rudian. “With Elderan out of the way and unable to bring little brats here, manners will slowly fade away. With Pleezam and Thankoo locked up we can finally get into Politeeville and steal the Good Book. Over time manners will be forgotten.”

“Right on your royal rudeness,” laughed Big Burpa.

“Now get that brat a uniform, we’re gonna need all the soldiers we can get to storm the walls of Politeeville.”

Jordan had to do something quick so he could try and get away and free the three Politees. They had to warn the others that the Ignorantees were able to get through the magic force around Politeeville and enter the city.

“Thank-you very much Queen Rudian. I really can’t wait to join the guard. You and Big Burpa are the best,” Jordan blurted out.

At those words Queen Rudian let out a loud shriek and fell to floor claspng her ears in pain. When Jordan looked around the room all the Ignorantees were on the floor grabbing their ears in pain. Some were desperately reaching for their ear padded helmets.

Big Burpa managed a few raspy words, “What are you doing? Don’t say those words.”

The big helmets with the padded ears now made sense. That’s why Big Burpa didn’t seem to hear Jordan’s farting on the ride. It also explained the soundproof jail cells. Polite words caused pain to Ignorantees ears. That’s what kept them from getting too close to Politeeville. The Politees just used their manners all the time without thinking and when the Ignorantees got too close, they heard the words and were instantly in pain.

Jordan now knew what to do and began to shout loudly, “Excuse me Big Burpa. Pardon me for being so rude. Please let me help you in anyway I can. I’m so very sorry.”

With this last loud outburst almost all the Ignorantees in the great hall had either passed out from the pain or were blubbering masses on the floor.

Jordan ran from the hall every time he passed by an Ignorantee he yelled out every polite word he could remember. They fell down instantly. No one was wearing their protective helmets inside their own village. Getting into Smelly Sock Jail was no problem, guards were passing out left, right and centre from Jordan’s melody of good manners.

Elderan and the others were locked in a padded jail cell with thick glass. Jordan took the keys hanging by the cell and opened the door. Elderan had a shocked look on his face and began to stammer, “How the heck.....”

Jordan cut him off, “I don’t have time to explain. We must get out of here before the Ignorantees wake up.”

They all snuck out a back door and grabbed some horses out of a stable. They rode out of Ignorandom as fast as they could go.

The Politees and Jordan arrived at the walls to Politeeville. Once inside Elderan began to quiz Jordan, “How did you do it? How did you make the Ignorantees pass out?”

Jordan began to explain, “Well it kinda happened by accident. I was getting used to using my manners again and some of it just popped out. I had to pretend to be rude so that the Ignorantees would trust me. They wanted me to become part of Queen Rudian’s Ignorance Patrol and help them get the Good Book from King Pardon. When I said thank-you, they grabbed their ears in pain.”

Jordan then went on to explain the rest of what he had figured out in Ignorandom. The Good Book wasn’t really a spell book. The Ignorantees just hadn’t heard manners for so long, so it made their ears hurt and made them feel funny inside.

Elderan replied, “Jordan you saved Mannerland. Pleezam and Thankoo noticed not too long ago that the Ignorantees were wearing those big padded helmets. That’s how come they were coming closer and closer to Politeeville. They must have figured it out.”

Elderan and Jordan walked a short distance to the very centre of Politeeville. There stood a large castle, with beautiful trees and grass surrounding it.

“Come Jordan, I think it’s time you met King Pardon,” said Elderan.

Elderan took Jordan into a great hall and at the very end of the room sat many people around a big table talking to each other. Elderan and Jordan approached the head of the table where a very pleasant looking man with a long beard and crown sat.

“King Pardon it’s a pleasure to meet you sir,” said Jordan.

“Jordan Riplan, you have saved Mannerland from certain doom,” replied King Pardon.

“We never knew why were able to defeat the Ignorantees. We thought it was a magical force that prevented them from entering Politeeville. I guess in a way using good manners is a magical force.”

Elderan beamed at Jordan.

King Pardon continued, “I grant you, Jordan Riplan our highest honour. The official Mannerland Code of Manners Medallion.”

King Pardon then presented Jordan with a beautiful silver coin. It had a picture of Table Manners Mountain on one side and King Pardon on the other. He slipped it in his pants pocket.

“Come Jordan we must go. It’s time we head back to your world” said Elderan.

With that the bright light of the Time Portal appeared.

Jordan turned to Elderan, “Thank-you Elderan. I have learned so much.”

“I am glad you found your manners again, but your learning has just begun. Remember that little white lie you told when you lost your homework last week,” smiled Elderan.

“Expect another visitor soon. His name is Nomora Fibbs and his specialty is lies. Good Luck!”

Jordan’s smile fell at that news and the bright light rose up all around him and then everything went dark.

Jordan awoke in his bed. His clothes were still on, but a blanket had been placed over

him. He sat straight up in bed, it must have been a dream, but it felt so real. Jordan raced downstairs and his parents were sitting at the table eating breakfast.

“Mom, Dad I’m sorry for how I behaved last night. I know I should be punished for being so rude,” Jordan said to his parents.

Jordan sat at the table and ate his breakfast. His mom and dad were stunned by the manners he was using. They were sure aliens had replaced their son during the night. Jordan got up from the table and went upstairs before his parents could get any words out.

He was going to change his clothes from yesterday and get ready for school. He took off his jeans and was going to put them in the laundry hamper when something fell out of the pocket. Jordan thought it was a quarter and picked it up. His mouth fell open as he looked at the silver coin with the picture of Table Manners Mountain on the front. Nomora Fibbs was going to be visiting him very soon.

THE END!!!