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## THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

By Gary Mitchell

*“The place where the two rivers met was a natural defensive position, the sea and harbour on three sides of the headland. But it had fallen anyway, and now resistance was futile. Cadwae, controller of the mint, buried the chief’s coin horde and made his way out into the settlement. People were screaming as the enemy poured through the breach in the double dykes and wooden wall, men fleeing across the mud – those that could swim braving the dangerously fast race between the head and the mainland. But Cadwae wanted to live. Moving away from the horde - he’d come back later – he stood on the path and raised his hands.*

*‘Barbaria nothus!’ one of the enemy gestured and Cadwae found himself kicked by a studded sandal around toward where women and children and a few old men were being herded together, most crying. Cadwae felt glad he had no family.*

*A officer rode over. ‘Work – obey – and you will live’, he told them in their own tongue. ‘Cross us and you die. In my scroll there are only three types of slave’. Cadwae involuntarily coughed and the Roman looked at him. ‘And which are you, Briton? The good, the bad, or the ugly?’”*

“Yes, yes, I see...” the Mayor tetchily demanded as he looked out of the ancient civic offices at the preserved gasometer. “You’re the Borough Planning Officer – responsible for reconstruction. What’s an extract from a four-hundred year old historical novel got to do with our present situation?”

“My point is this has happened before – in the past”.

“Not since the Normans”, Councillor Douglas retorted.

“Christchurch – Tynham – has survived – adapted. We can do so again. *Rebuild*”.

“Impossible! They’ve flattened Somerford – the ratepayers would never...”

“*They’re here!*” someone buzzed up from reception, cutting Councillor Thatcher off mid sentence. The door of the council chamber burst open, and in stepped three of them, all brandishing blasters, an alien stench assailing the human’s nostrils.

“I liberate you from the tyranny of The United States of Earth on behalf of the Galactic Coalition!” the insectoid snorted through its voice box.

A Skeg, a Golandan and a Narindan confronted the elected leaders of Christchurch.

The good, the bad, and the ugly.