Family Always Comes First

A tale by Maitiu' de Faoite

Where I grew up in Munster we had all heard of the great heroic tales of Finn MacCumhal and Cu' Chullain and the Red Branch Knights. We all hoped to grow up and be just like them and live lives of romance and adventure. As time passed we came to realize we were more likely to live lives of harvesting crops, pasturing animals and practicing trades. It was most likely you would do exactly what your father did.

My father had different ideas for me. He wanted me to have choices. I considered Holy Orders but I did not wish to depart to Spain to go to seminary even though I had a sister who lived in Salamanca. I could follow my father as a gray merchant but negotiating prices with boisterous clan chiefs and parsimonious townsmen, filling out ledgers, spending so much time on the road and dodging English tax collectors was not to my taste.

Being a soldier, an Irish Bonnaught, now that sounded adventurous. Through my father's political connections I was placed under the training of James Fitzmaurice, Captain of Desmond. He was a seasoned, professional soldier who had seen action on the Continent in the service of King Philip of Spain. With a small group of recruits I received training in the weapons of the day. Some of us were chosen to be gunners and others on the use of the bow. We all had training in use of sword, ax and dart. A dart is larger than an arrow and smaller than a spear. With proper training it can be thrown with surprising velocity and accuracy. It is very effective against an enemy not wearing plate or mail. A combatant using darts had to be agile and swift as well as accurate. One usually carried 3 to 4 darts. After throwing the last one it was common practice to retrieve them while dodging darts that were being thrown back. The ax required less skill but more aggressiveness. It was a totally offensive weapon. James evaluated me and determined I should carry darts and use the ax as a secondary weapon. At sword I was a failure. My instructors threw their hands up in frustration at my ineptitude with the sword.

Cattle raids were a way of life in the border areas between Desmond and the neighboring provinces of Ormond and Thomond. We stole your cows and you stole ours. In the raids, fighting and wounds were common and deaths were not unheard of. James wanted to test our skills on his nemesis, Black Tom Butler, the earl of Ormond, and cousin to Elizabeth of England. Our raid was planned with a small party of men and boy recruits numbering about 20. Of the veteran fighters we had Tomas MacSheehy who was a member of a galloglass family that served the Earl of Desmond. The MacSheehy's were of Hebridean origin but that must have been generations ago. Tomas was Irish in every way except for the big sword he carried. Naccaddin and Michael O'Connor were the fostered sons of the Earl. They were from the O'Connor Dons of Connaught. We even had visitors from Tirconnell who asked to join us for the sake of pure adventure. They were Hugh O'Donnell and his captain Morgan MacCarraig. James had the intention of having the older and more experienced men watch out for the new recruits.

The raid started out uneventful. I discovered being a soldier was less about bravery and skill in battle and more about enduring privations. We traveled at night and slept during the day. We were careful to stay off the roads and trails to conceal our presence. We lived off barley and oats cooked in our helmets over carefully concealed fires. We had crossed the River Suir and proceeded to pastureland outside the city of Kilkenny.

Kilkenny was a Butler stronghold and a likely place for him to keep his stock. Butler had allies and hirelings to guard his animals. We were likely to encounter MacMorroughs, Cavanaughs, and Whites in our raid. The Whites and de Faoites were united by blood but divided by employment and religion. We would gather on rare occasions to reaffirm our bond. My father reminded me that despite their faults we should extend to them charity and love. I contemplated how I might do that if I met my cousins in combat. Despite my training I had never really thrown at a man and wondered if I could kill someone. I secretly hoped it wouldn't come to that.

We found 60 head of cattle unattended about 10 miles outside of Kilkenny. Rounding them up and driving them toward home seemed easy. As it turned out it was not easy at all. The experienced members of our party were noticeably nervous, except for Hugh O'Donnell. He sang, spoke to the cattle as if they were people, and gave them names. He also teased his captain, Morgan, unmercifully. We now drove the herd during the daylight and over all roads and trails that were available. It is hard to conceal 60 beasts and speed of travel was the priority. As we approached the ford where we would cross the Suir, Fitzmaurice and MacSheehy and his people formed a rear guard. O'Donnell and MacCarraig would guard the flanks and the O'Connors and I were to lead the herd across the river. The lead was thought to be the safest place. Conventional wisdom had the main counterattack occurring at the rear.

We reached the river at midday. The ford appeared clear and unoccupied. We had a grassy field on the Ormond side but there were boulders and trees on our side, the Desmond side. If there was to be an ambush, it would have to occur on the Desmond side and that seemed likely. Michael O'Connor and I dashed across the rocks and shallow water of the ford like young girls skipping after Sunday Mass. We then heard the whining and whistling sounds of projectiles flying through the air then splashing in the water. The bastards had crossed in front of us and, hiding in the cover of trees and rocks, were indeed attacking from the Desmond side. O'Connor and I were in shallow water but in deep trouble. Michael began to call out a warning for Naccaddin, O'Donnell and MacCarraig to move up when it was cut short by a sickening smack of a dart piercing his breast. He turned, bent at the knees, and feel backwards in the water with a dart protruding from his torso. I remember his eyes and their wide eternal stare. The darts now started coming my way. I dropped my darts in panic and turned to run. Every fiber in my body said, "Run!" I am sorry to say that I did run. I ran a dozen paces and another emotion erupted. It was rage. I raged at my cowardice, I raged at the death of my friend Michael, and I raged at the thrower of that fatal dart. Poor Michael, born of the royal house of the O'Connor's of Connaught, died in a Munster river ford. I still had my ax in hand and charged back through the herd of confused balking cattle.

From behind a boulder came two big fellows in plate armor. They were as big and fierce as Ian MacMillan and Duncan Somerville of the Guard. They brushed right by me as if I were not there. Their eyes were on the cattle herd and driving them back to the Ormond side of the river. Next came a scrawny fellow, which means he was about my size, he had a sallow complexion, graying hair and he wielded a broad sword. Had he met me on solid ground and in his younger days, I have no doubt I would have been floating off with O'Connor in the Suir. When he swung his sword, he slipped in the wet rocks and is sword blow glanced off my shoulder. Before he could recover, I hamstrung him with my ax as I raced by. My eyes were on the dart man on the boulder. I don't know if the old fellow died. I hope now that he did not.

A lad, about my age, and dressed in a leather jerkin began to scramble about the boulders searching for another dart to throw. He looked vaguely familiar. I threw my ax at him before he could pick up a dart. While he was watching the arcing flight of my ax fly by his head, I seized a dart myself and threw it at his chest. My aim was off and the dart pierced his thigh. Screaming in pain he fell back on the ground clutching his thigh. I had no weapon at all now, but my hands and I intended to break his neck with them. I grabbed him and started shaking him when I heard from his mouth in gurgling Irish, "Oro n'il, a Mhaitiu', mise Roibeard." The rage diminished and I saw the very familiar face of my cousin Robert White. "Jesus, Mary and Joseph! Bobby!" Being mindful of my father's words through the rage, din of battle, and the bellowing of frightened cattle, I dragged him behind the boulder. I broke the shaft of the dart and pushed the head through. Bobby was lucky, I missed the artery. I was applying a tourniquet to staunch the bleeding when I felt a sharp pain in my head and saw flashing lights. I must have been clubbed from behind. As I regained consciousness I heard Bobby pleading in English for my life to be spared. "Don't do it, MacMorrough. Can't you see, he was trying to help me, he's my cousin." MacMorrough looked at Robert then peered at me. "Run away, you little gobshite, your cousin has saved you!"

Not looking back, not even to say goodbye to Bobby, I ran until I dropped. It was toward evening that I found the rest of the raiding party further to the west and on our side of the river. Our party of 20 was reduced to 16. O'Connor and 3 others were lost. MacShehy was mortally wounded and died two days later. MacCarraig and O'Donnell claimed they killed two attackers a piece and Fitzmaurice said he killed three. I never told them about Bobby or the hamstrung old fellow.

Our wee cattle raid was not glorious or profitable. We didn't bring one cow back and I lost four friends and nearly killed my cousin. I realized I was not fit to be a Bonnaught or a mercenary. I discovered an interest in brewing ale and beer and became apprenticed to a master brewer. I became not a priest or a soldier but a brewmaster. Sure, I can fight if the cause is just, but I would rather buy you a beer than a fight.

Years later I was in a tavern in Cork by the sea awaiting the arrival of Sir James Mosman from Scotland. We were going to make a deal about exporting ale to Scotland while avoiding the English tax collector. I was sitting at a table by myself when an English sailor with a limp hobbled into the bar and sat down at my table. "Bobby, you old heretic, it is good to see you!" Bobby and I lifted a pint or three, laughing, singing, and telling stories when Mosman walked in. Seeing the Englishman caused some concern until I assured Sir James. "It's all right. Bobby is my cousin. We used to fight when we were younger, but now we are friends." Then Sir James said it best: "Family always comes first."

From the Mists

Greetings to all,

The Irish Mercenaries wish you all a wonderful Holiday Season!

We had a wonderful year, enjoying the faires with all of our good friends. Many thanks to those of you who were able to join Teage and me at our Hand-fasting in the shire of Pittsburg . We had a wonderful time surprising all of you, and we promise that next time we will let all of you know well ahead of time when the happy day will be - just a hint, be sure you are at Pittsburg next year.

Congratulations go out to Maitiu', who won the Thor's Hammer at the Pleasanton Faire! It was a well deserved award for a man who works tirelessly for the good of St. Andrews. A hearty congratulations to you, Maitiu'!

As some of you have heard, the Irish Mercenaries will be undergoing a subtle change, instead of just Irish we will be asking folk of any nationality to join us this next year, be they Scotsmen, Italians, French, Germans - whomever is willing to swear loyalty to our good Queen Mary will be welcome - even ex-privateers. We hope to increase our ranks in service to Her Majesty so that we might defeat any enemies who attempt to invade the Queen's lands. We are looking for not only good fighters, but also musicians, storytellers, squires, and others who might assist in our encampment as we travel to defend Her Majesty.

On the subject of fighters, it is very gratifying to see the Highland Women who were willing to take up the sword and begin some training. As you know, often our men are off fighting battles in Her Majesty's name and we women will have to be able to defend Her Court and ourselves. Therefore it is wonderful to see some of the Highland Women are willing to take up arms.

We are eagerly looking forward to Winters Feast, and all of the festivities that it entails.

Cailin Rua Kelly
Chamberlain of the Mercenaries

www.saintandrewsguild.com

This is where to go for information regarding your St Andrews Membership. The Guild Calendar, important History, guidelines, costuming ideas, Household pages, fun and helpful links – good stuff for everyone!
If you haven't already, log on today and have a look around – check in often, as the site gets updated as new information becomes available!

See the January Parchment & the web (www.saintandrewsguild.com) for updates to the 2007 event calendar!

Meet and Greet -------- 0.1.0

(or: A Gaffer's Advice to my Fellow Actors)

by Gaffer Applewright

4/30/97

People come to Faire to be entertained. Some do well know our delights and amusements. Some did hear from others and would see, hear and taste for themselves. Some be curious and adventuresome, but know not what to expect.

An we would our private fantasies continue (what e'er faire character you do fancy yourself) then pains we must take, that all visitors leave with firm resolve to return and sense of discovery so compelling they must tell all of the wonders they did find.

Now forsooth, when asked, "What of the faire?", most remember in a general way, the costumes and pageantry, the singers, dancers, and actors and shire folk, and recall no detail. Instead they relate with glittering detail and shining words all they did eat and drink. Even so, though some try, our customers spend not the entire day eating and drinking. An what they saw, heard and did, please them not, meat and drink become less savory. Then doth appear an uneasy thought the day were ill spent. Given a truly distasteful experience, they be lost forever along with all others they may counsel. How then to create the impressions that bring people back? In sooth there be no single answer, for they do all differ, one from another. But thou wilt not err, an thy guide be the Golden Rule! Think of thyself. How wouldst thou be treated and spoken to? What would make thee feel welcome and at ease? What would please thee and make thee desirous to return? What would make thee bring many others ? Then think of thy friends, relatives, and co-workers. What would they?

-------NOTICE THEM!-------

I have found some few things that people mark and remember. Most universal, YOU DID NOTICE THEM AND INVITE THEM TO PLAY. In this, the Faire is unique. Faire is not a speetator sport. This is not TV. We can respond to them, even touch them and shake hands!

Our modern society frowns on commerce between strangers. Seldom it is we share news and gossip, joke, or laugh with one we meet by the way. But, here we do surround and mingle with our audience. And they are invited to be an active part of the entertainment. Consider the dance in front of main gate at opening each morning. If I do judge correctly the ever increasing numbers of well dressed visitors, they be sore envious of our play and would fain join our sport.

Now in sooth, those of 16th century England did both fear and distrust the foreigner, But!!! This be our Spring/Harvest Celebration! and Market Day! Have you not heard the cry "The Glove is up!" Are we not all under the Queen's protection? And are we not curious? What wonders do these travelers say? What news and tales do they bring?

So invite them to play. Politely introduce yourself: "Good Gentles, I be Gaffer Applewright, a scholar" (or miller, serving maid, yeoman, daughter of Frank the merchant, Spinster, Midwife, Goodwife and helpmate to John the tanner...) and inquire after the purpose of your visitor. "What be thy business, for I have ne'er seen such a hat (shirt, shoe, belt, what ever)? How didst thou make it? Is it thy badge of office?" Marvel at their reply (...Pro..gram..mer?..Didst thou say Programmer?...) then on to explain how we identify classes by their clothing, sumptuary laws etc. Oft times it is best to greet those who walk in a group, for the individual therein doth feel protected and you may approach.

----------BE HELPFUL----------

Watch for anyone looking at the map of the faire, then look over their shoulders until noticed and ask "May I aid thee with thy chart?" If you know not the answer to a question, direct them unto the info booths. No matter, you have started a conversation and might continue it by asking them questions about themselves, offering advice on plays or entertainment, (Fowl Tails be a most wondrous entertainment) and faire news (I did hear that the Queen in progress doth visit the Maypole this day) and bits of gossip (I did hear me that Jack the taylor be called to

answer at Pye Powder Court. For he did sell the pig that did live with John the miller. Do you know of Pye Powder Court? Aye we do find it most excellent source of gossip, scandal and amusement (Then describe the court, which does not get the attention it deserves.)

"At Faire, there be such variety of amusement that a single day has not the hours to hear it all. Have ye e'er seen such a faire? "

"There be the Scots camp, where one can easily spend half a day if one hath the wit to ask the Scots of their industries, homes, crafts, arms, history, and customs, and hath the eyes, nose and ears to appreciate the answers."

"There be the Guild of St. Ives, the merchant's guild, where one may learn of commerce. "

"There be the John Barleycorn/Greenman Inn, where we do take our ease to game and gossip with our neighbors while the Lord of Misrule doth rule in jest. "

"There be the Washer Women where one may learn the latest scandal. "

"There be a Master Mariner who would teach navigation and the ways of the sea, jugglers who would teach the mystery of the slow ball, and schools where ye may learn gunnery, corn dolly weaving, basket making, spinning, weaving.... "

"There be singers, musicians, story tellers, magicians, jugglers and jesters. "

"There be the Military, the Horse Tourney, the Middle Class, the Friends of Faire, the Mongers,"...and on and on.

"There be some four or more stages where excellent entertainment may be heard." (The environmental areas are stages, as well as is any spot where you may chose to play.) "There be o'er a hundred merchants who would advise, bejewel, dress, arm, wine and dine the traveler. Entertain with diverse games, and rides. And bedazzle with quaint and marvelous, crafts, curios and objects of art the like of which have ne'er been seen."

Learn something of some aspect of the faire, then weave it into thy conversations and bring attention to it. Go to a booth, environmental area, individual or group and ask what they represent and what they would a visitor should know of them. 'Chipping under Oakwood' is a small town, some 50 to 80 families, and each one of us must needs know the business of all. Futher it doth aid thine own effort to explain thy character or trade.

----------BE FRIENDLY----------

Profitable encounter can start with no more than "And does the Faire please you this day?" At this, visitors will stop, smile, say "Yes," and wait for your next comment. Those who will not stop, be in urgent need of a privy or be unwilling to share and there be no profit to stay them. Continue with "What then doth please ye most?" Consider the answer. Tell of yourself. Ask if they did sample thy favorite amusement. Recommend a show, a ride, a vendor, a food booth. Warn of the mongers, the Puritans, the Sheriff, the Friar who would a bit of the true cross sell. Ask their opinion of Jesters Grove, the mystic readers, and so on. Ask if they have seen the ale wench at ale four? There be none like her. The gossip of the washer women be scandalous! And what news did they say? Was not the Tournament of Horse magnificent?

When Queen Elizabeth enters the conversation, remember her popularity rating is near 100%. She is Gloriana! The most beautiful, the wisest, the greatest, the bravest, the kindest, the most generous etc. etc. etc. Even when we do not approve of things she must to do in her official capacity, we loved her and fear and respect her as monarch, and symbol of ENGLAND, and we are fiercely proud to be English and her subjects. And so it be with near all Englishmen, even those harmed by her justice.

Recall that no conspiracy which assumed it had general support (Catholic or otherwise) that sought to depose Elizabeth, succeeded, for such support did not exist. When egomaniac Essex came close to mounting a successful attack on the throne, his followers melted in the face of sour London disapproval. When Stubbs wrote that child bearing would endanger the Queen and thereby spoke against the Queen's person, it did not matter that he sought to preserve her life. When you libeled royalty your right hand was forfeit. When judgment was

executed, Stubbs did sweep off his hat with his remaining hand, and cry "God Save the Queen" afore he did swoon. This is England. 159(?). Lay it on thick. You can not over do it. Long may she reign!

Visitors are usually puzzled by the Bones Band. It serves well to tell them "This be the Dance Macabre. It doth remind us that we be here but a little while. Eat, Drink and be Merry, for tomorrow you may join our merry band. Forsooth is not the great death still among us? Did it not rise again last year in London?" (However watch the kids. I have seen them badly frightened by the Bones Band. Counsel their parents and point out "At such a tender age no border doth divide the fantastic and the real." and assure the child that this is no more than a mask and costume such as they wear on Hallowe'en.) (Unfortunately some kids are scared of their own Halloween costumes.)

----------CHARACTERIZATION---------

A character that fits you well, is easily remembered and comfortable to wear, doth much ease the commerce of the day, as upon occasion it even maketh your unexpected reply correct, without a conscious thought!

Who art thou? This be 16th Century England and the person upon thy gate pass did vanish at the gate. Thy character needeth not great depth; encounters in the street seldom last o'er a minute or so. Mine own "Apple" yarn takes less than two. Thou wilt not be questioned in detail, unless thou wearest a distinctive costume. Then 'tis wise to wear a ready explanation, who thou art, and mayhap somewhat of thy trade. Thou shouldst not have to think about who thou art, how thou wert raised or by whom. Work this all out in advance, but keep the tale simple. 'Tis seldom needed, for most visitors will not pry, but if thou canst call on thy creation without hesitation, thou dost add a measure of depth and reality to thy conversation. Make sure thou canst repeat the same tale twice! Use a model, thine own family or that of another, or a book with which thou'rt familiar.

If thou be questioned about thy pretended trade and forsooth know it not, remember much technology be a mystery taught only to guild or family members. Be indignant when asked to reveal trade secrets. "My master would have me whipped were I to tell ye," or "My mother forbade I should e'er speak of it to strangers".

Just as our clothing appears authentic only at a distance, our characters need only 'appear' real. When pressed to reveal the machine stitching in your character, leave. 'Tis impolite of them to ask us to break character. If some one asks you where you work during the week, where do you really live etc., reply "Gramercy! I must away. Thou didst remind me I must meet my gossip (god-sib, i.e. good friend and sibling) at the Cross Keyes Inn!" (or whatever) And leave! Direct those questions your character cannot answer to Friends of Faire or an info booth.

You need little material to meet and greet. Keep in mind one of the truly great magicians of our day who when complimented on his amazing performance, by a fellow magician replied "But I only know six tricks". (But they were executed flawlessly.) Be you 'prentice to the faire, I do think me 'twer better to polish one or two bits than try many poorly. With experience, improvision will suggest itself. If you find something that works use it again and again. By now I have cut some 6500 apples. It may bore you at times, but your audience changes as you turn about and their response will differ every time. Don't listen to yourself. Watch them.

If you have a distinctive bit, you will be remembered for it. But an 'Apple Trick' is not needed to make the day pleasant and memorable for some one. If you were pleasant, informative, helpful, entertaining, disgusting, amusing, or shocking (but not threatening) and gave an impression of genuine interest in the customer, both you and the faire will be remembered with favor.

I am ever sought by a score and more regular visitors who would hear my latest riddle. There be cripples, exhibitionists and visitors with unusual, bizarre or distinctive dress that return regularly. I have made a point of greeting them all. That a person is different, does not make them less worthy of the best entertainment you can provide. I do indeed much worry when I do not see the Devil, for without him the Puritans have no point. The man in the wheel chair, Don Quixote, the Lady in the Red Satin Dress, the Cat Women, the Gentlemen Adventurers, the Vikings and the Mongols. I greet them all.

If you wish to be rude, lewd, insulting, obnoxious, or disgusting, you may, but take care who you choose to play with. A few delight in trading insults. But visitors with children or dates may not care to look the fool. I shudder at the word 'turkey', or 'mark' or anything that indicates the person speaking looks down on our customers. There is

no place at Faire for the ego trip, for those who would pleasure themselves by degrading the customer or use their skills to cause the customer embarrassment or loss of face.

---------SPEAK THE SPEECH----------

If we spoke true 16th century Elizabethan few would understand us. The visitors expect to hear 16th century but will accept anything that is different. Some of us master the Basic Faire Accent sounds and can read a modern text while sounding very Elizabethan. If not, make an effort to master archaic sentence structure and word patterns. Invert the sequence on subject and verb. Throw in a few phrases such as "I think me" and "I be" a "thee" and "thou" and add an occasional "eth" (he maketh, she bringeth) and most believe ye the genuine article. (Gee, Martha, he sounds just like the book.) Maybap they did read Shakespear or the King James Bible or heard recitation from these and similar sources. Whatever it is, it seems to work. I am occasionally asked "How long did it take you to learn to "talk like that?" (Answer: "I did learn at my mother's knee")

----------ATTITUDE----------

Laugh and the world laughs with you, cry and you cry alone. We are on stage! LAUGH! SMILE! Your attitude diffuses throughout the crowd and reflects back upon you. When you walk about with "My feet hurt, I'm hot, I itch, I stink, I need a bath, my head aches ..." written plainly on your face, 'tis no wonder the day be gray and none smile.

Try this. As you walk through a crowd make eye contact with some one, and SMILE! ...and marvel as the world does shine and smile in return.

Share the honor you feel in being a member of a parade. Make eye contact and smile. Wave and salute. Many who watch would dearly love to trade places with you. To be noticed and recognized by the parade is near like being in it when you know naught but the isolation of TV. Smile and be enthusiastic even when you don't make eye contact for someone you do not see is watching you. Our hobby horses are an excellent example of enthusiasm. As I walk along to the side, I hear laughter and praise when the hobbies prance and dance in the parade.

And above all ...

---------- PLAY FAIRE! ----------

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A Missive from the Editor

In closing the year, I just wanted to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all of the contributors to the Parchment. Without you, there wouldn't be one. As for my frequent contributors, and you know who you are, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I could not do this alone!

GRAMERCY!

Lady Kyra Alura MacNeil

Seamstresses & Tailors

Below is a listing of those good souls that can sew a new gown or doublet for you!!

Lady Cheri MacCarraig
Fremont, CA
510-770-1443

Dame Brianna de St Joer
Yellowstone, WY
307-344-9213

Dame Mariota Arres
Antioch, CA
925-754-6032

Dame Judith Von Holstein
Modesto, CA (Tams Only)
209-577-4761

They are all independent contractors – Give them a call and put in your order! Can you sew? Care to earn some money plying your craft, please contact Lady Kyra if you are interested in adding your name to our Seamstresses & Tailors list. Members only, please.

In need of Children's Costuming?
We may have something available to fit your poppet in the 'Children's Costume Trunk". Has your child outgrown their garb? Why not donate it to the Guild for future use? For information, please contact Lady Kyra at lady_kyra@yahoo.com or 408-733-1145.

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1 page	$50.00

The Parchment

is published approx. every three months. It, in conjunction with the monthly newsletter, is the major communication source for all Guild folk.

If you have interest in contributing to *The Parchment*, please contact Lady Kyra MacNeil.