FLOWER OF SOUVENANCE

#12

letters for the falcon gentle

Cover art is by Lord Galen of Wiltshire

Letter From the Editor;

Greetings!

After a slightly late start, issue #12 is finally finished and in your hands. This issue is somewhat hefty due to the amount of material. I am trying to solicit more armoring articles, as I have received a number of letters requesting such.

Until next time, this is your busy, busy editor bidding you fair journey and fair tourney! In Service to the Ideal, Cymber

Flower of Souvenance

Will Sponsor a Tournament at T.F.Y.C.

First Prize
Color Portrait for Two
by William Blackfox

Second Prize
Picnic Basket for Two
(Sans food)

Most Chivalrous
Computerized Embroidery
of Your Device
(samples will be displayed)

Best Death
Silver Celtic Cloak Clasp
donated by the Amazon Household

The Tourney will be held Wednesday, March 27th, at in 10 the morning, starting on the dot. Sign up will be open from 9:30 am and will close during the first round for late entrants. The tourney will be held single fight, double elimination (see below). Society standards will be enforced.

There will be no entrance fee, but donations to the Flower of Souvenance will be greatly appreciated. Those who submit an article for publication in the Flower of Souvenance or purchase a subscription at the time of sign-up will receive one extra death for the tourney!

If you have questions, please contact:
Countess Cymber of the Darkwater
c/o KC Lancaster
6633 Irving
Denver, CO 80221
(303) 428-3169

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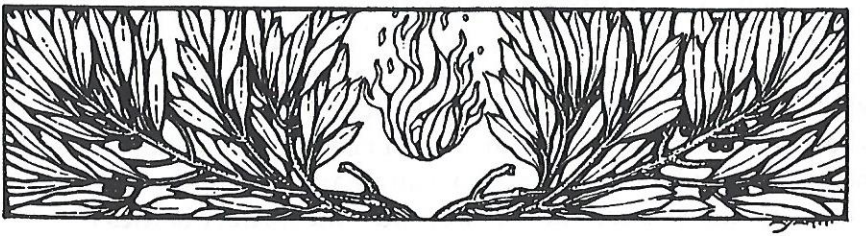

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All submissions may be subject to editing. If requested, the author of a submitted article will receive a copy of the issue in which that article appears. Editorials will be printed occasionally with a response from the editor, this response is the editors current opinion and should not be viewed as factual unless suitable documentation is given.

Publication falls in the following months; February, May, August, and November. All submissions must be received before the first of the month of publication the author wishes that article to appear. Publication will commence regardless of submission allotment or the lack of it. All mailing of current and back issues will occur at the same time, on or about the end of the month of publication. If any problems occur with mailing to subscribers, they are encouraged to write the editor for clarification.

Advertising is printed as space allows. Rates are $20.00 full page, $10.00 half page, $5.00 quarter page. All checks and money orders must be made payable to KC Lancaster. DO NOT SEND CASH THROUGH THE MAIL!

AMAZONS

and other interested parties

The Amazon Household
will be at the
Twenty Fifth Year Celebration.
Any and all wishing to meet and talk
fighting and the support of such efforts
are welcome to come to the Amazon Encampment
and do so.

AMAZONS

Are you a member of the household because you are independent?
Do you want to support lady fighters and fighters in general?
Do you want to meet hardworking and ambitious men?
Do you want to assume highly visible responsibilities?

Then join the Amazon Waterbearers Guild!

Many of my sisters, daughters, nieces, etc. cannot fight for one reason or another yet have the heart of a warrior. Our household's main purpose is for the nurturing of women fighters and fighters in general. How can we non-fighters do that? We can commit ourselves to bear water for those who can. I don't need to tell you how necessary and appreciated this task is. If you can't stay on your feet long enough to carry water, you can fill water bottles and spritzer bottles for those who can. I challenge you to act on your convictions! I hope to field a large contingent of Amazon Waterbearers at TFYC!

Come join us!

Contact:
Lady Marthe de Blenkinsop
c/o Martha L. Nichols
1805 Petroleum
Odessa, TX 7962
(915) 362-6001

Polearm Fighting Part IV
TRAINING

By Sir Kazimier of Silesia

Being the best you can be is all anyone can ask of you. But to become the best you must train. Training is physical exercise and the sharpening of abilities to do a task that requires a skill.

The best way I have found to train in polearm fighting, is to set up two or three targets at head level (five or six feet off the ground) and six or more feet apart from each other. Then, making sure your in range of all targets, start thrusting at them. Concentrate on accuracy, speed will come later, keep thrusting until tired, rest, then go again and again going faster as you hit all targets.

For more demanding training, tie a ball (six inches) to a rope and suspend it at the desired height. Thrust at the ball even when it's bouncing around and keep after the target, remember accuracy is vital.
At fighting practice it is good to regularly subject the shield bearers to regular pike thrust training. This gives the polearm fighter and shieldmen practice for attack and defense.

Practice "off handed" occasionally also. If your comfortable thrusting with your right arm, try working with your left. Do this as a way of becoming familiar with the difference.

Mundane exercise is an important part of anyones training. I would strongly recommend jogging two or three miles a week as a minimum and doing some sort of work with weights. Other excellent exercise that can be done without weights are pull ups (for arms, shoulders), sit ups (for back and stomach), push ups (for chest and arms) and press ups (for chest, arms and shoulders). Find an exercise program that is fun for you and keep at it.

WOMEN'S TOURNEYS

by Viscountess Yseult Summerhall

For the third year in a row there is to be a women's prize tourney at Pennsic. I would like to urge all women to participate in this valuable and fun experience. The following article is a bit of information on the history and reasons for the women's tourney at Pennsic.

At Pennsic XVIII, there were three fighting princesses; Princess Elina of Trimaris, Princess Ariake of the Middle, and myself, Princess Yseult of the Mists. We enjoied fighting each other and the other ladies that we met. It became apparent that the more we talked and fought together, the more we had to share and learn. There were also many ladies who were amazed that some of the differences pertaining to lady fighters had never been explained to them. We all decided that it would be a good idea to have a women's fighter practice to do some learning. At Pennsic were gathered more women from more diverse backgrounds than anywhere in the known world. This was a wonderful opportunity, far too good for us to pass up. We also decided that some of us were competitive enough that we'd like to put the practice into use. We scheduled a fighter practice and a tournament following the practice. I don't remember quite how it happened, but it ended up that I was the fortunate one to host the tournament. After talking to Prince Robert we decided to have the Mists sponsor a prize tournament. When my lady- in-waiting and I went shopping for the prizes, we found the merchants were most pleased about the tournament. So many merchants were so generous that by the time we had spent our money we had lots of wonderful prizes, many of which had been donated. We had trouble coming up with enough categories for all the prizes.

I was unsure as to how popular the tournament would be and assumed we might get only a dozen or so fighters. I also thought we might get some flak due to the sexist nature of the event. As soon as we opened the lists, we had a long line of contestants. We kept the lists open right up to the start of the first round to try and accommodate the late entrants who kept arriving. We had 44 entrants, and closed the lists because we didn't think we could handle more. We were a bit unprepared for that large of a tournament. Fortunately we had many gracious people who gave of their time to make the event a huge success. We had only one person complain because he couldn't enter the tournament (the list mistress suggested that she could take the prize dagger, and see to it that he could enter . He declined). That tournament was won by Viscountess (in her own right) Gwenhllian Rhiannon, late of Drach-enwald. The tournament at Pennsic XIX was sponsored by Earl Sir Shannon with the help of the (non-SCA official) Kingdom of Acre. The event was organized in about a day, and we weren't able to get much publicity out. Still, there were 22 entrants. This event was won by Countess Elina. So much for history.

I am fortunate enough to be in an area which is helpful to women fighters. We have two women knights in the area and several other very good women fighters. More join the ranks all the time, and are treated as equals.

Still I found the women's tournaments at Pennsic useful and fun. I do not advocate women's only tournaments at a local level. I fight the women at a local level all the time. We share ideas and work on things together all the time. I see Countess Cymber, and Countess Elina and the other women from distant kingdoms only once or twice a year. Many of the women I meet at Pennsic are in need of encouragement, some want to test themselves against an opponent who has the same general body type (women's bodies are different in more ways than just the plumbing; our hips, elbows, wrists, center of gravity, and other things are very different from men). I have been told by many women fighters that the women's tourneys have been enormously helpful for both their fighting and their morale. Some women feel that a women's only tournament is less threatening, and can lose some of their tourney choke. It's great to see the different styles that have evolved in the different kingdoms, and show women who are more isolated the things we have been working on.

When we enter a tournament in our own kingdom, none of us ask for anything except the respect normally due a fighter. We certainly don't expect to be hit any lighter (or harder, I hear some men do that to women as a form of discouragement). Yes, ladies only tournaments exclude men. A ducal tournament excludes a lot of fighters, a friendship tournament involving two different kingdoms excludes my lord and I fighting together, a class in Italian Renaissance Costume excludes people who want to learn Viking garb. I had a lot of fun this summer at a squire's tournament which excluded a lot of people. We don't hold the women's only tournament just to exclude men, we do it to help a given minority and have fun. Perhaps someday women's tournaments will be outdated because they are no longer useful. I look forward to that day when women fighters are so common that they don't need to hold special tournaments, but may anyway just for fun and because there are enough of us to do it and lend dignity to the lists.

I look forward to the third annual women's tournament at Pennsic, and hope to see many of you there!

A TRUE HISTORY OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH ANSTEORRAN CROWN TOURNAMENT

By Master Cadfan ap Maorgan Godrudd

Her hand was still on her sword-hilt, the spur was still on her heel,
She had not cast her harness of grey, war-dinted steel;
High on her red-splashed charger, beautiful, bold, and browned,
Bright-eyed out of the battle, the Young Queen rode to be crowned.
—Rudyard Kipling, 1900 CE

We who revere the past often feel that History is only that which has gone before. Yet in the Shire of Emerald Keep (called in the vulgar tongue "Waco, Texas"), on the Tenth day of November, Anno Societatis Twenty-Five, History was not past, but present; forged living before the very eyes of a fortunate few who, in years hence, will be able to say proudly, "I was there". For in that place, and on that day, was chosen by virtue of high and noble deeds on the field of battle, the first Queen by Right of Arms in the history of the Knowne Worlde.

The day began with an early Royal Court. A bitterly cold night had given way to a surprisingly warm morning as the twenty-eight entrants to the Crown Lists took the solemn Sword Oath, promising to rule faithfully and justly as King and Queen of Ansteorra should Fate so deign to grant them victory that day. His Majesty Patrick then addressed the combatants and the populace at large, enjoining them to fight their best, and declaring in the severest terms that the Crown would not countenance any but the highest standards of conduct on the field. And even as Court ended, right so the combatants took the field; for the day was short so late in the year, and with each bout being fought best-two-of-three, a long list lay ahead.

Three fighters from my home Shire of Loch Soilleir entered the field that day; Lord Bors of Lothian, Lord Galen Edwin von Kirchenbauer, and Sir Rurik Ivarsson. All acquitted themselves nobly, with Sir Rurik reaching the semifinals before falling to his Grace, Duke Charles Inman MacMoor. No shame was there in that, for His Grace is widely known as one of the most formidable men-at-arms in the entire Knowne Worlde. Still, he fell in turn to Duke Hector Phillip Martel in the next-to-last bout of the day. That passage-at-arms will not soon be forgot by any who witnessed it: on the one hand stood Duke Inman, the black of his surcoat and armor relieved only by the unstained white of his newly-regained belt; on the other Duke Hector, resplendent in crimson and gold, his polished helm gleaming in the light of the westering sun. And when the battle was joined, the two gave such blows as have not been felt since Roland fought at Roncellveux! Yet in the end Duke Hector stood triumphant, having won the right to face his lady, Duchess Sir Rowan Beatrice von Kampfer, in the final bout.

If the bout between Hector and Inman was the stuff of legend, then that between Hector and Rowan was the stuff of myth. Never have I seen two opponents more puissant, or more equally matched in courage, prowess, noble bearing and chivalry. Every stroke was as graceful as the salmon's leap--at least, every one that was not too swift for the eye to follow! The first fall was won by Sir Rowan, the second by Sir Hector; then the Crown of Ansteorra hung in the balance, to be swung one way or the other by the weight of a single blow.

The sun was but a handsbreadth above the horizon as the two circled and feinted, seeking an opening in defenses each had helped the other build, and build well. Throughout all the assembled populace neither man nor woman spoke, or moved, or seemed to as much as breath: even the very wind was still. At last, a flurry of blows left Sir Hector on his knees, and the crowd as one drew breath. Then Sir Rowan did as befit a good and worthy knight, and offered her opponent the opportunity to yield. This did Sir Hector graciously refuse, and honor his lady greatly thereby; for he would not have bestowed upon her an honor which all might not say she had won fairly, and not through favor or influence. And so it was that in a final exchange of buffets, Duke Sir Hector Phillip Martel was at last felled to earth, and Her Grace, Duchess Sir Rowan Beatrice von Kampfer, came to her Kingdom by the strength of her own right arm.

At this the crowd, silent as stones but a moment before, rent the very hills with their cheering. The knights who had stood to marshal on the field rushed to embrace her--ceding first place to her lord, of course--and then proceeded to bear her around the field on their shoulders to the wild acclaim of the populace. Midway through this boisterous procession the realization of what she had accomplished seemed to finally hit her, for then she raised her arms in triumphant benediction and acknowledged the cheers of her people with that sparkling and carefree laughter Ansteorra has come to know in her, and love.

Then came their squires into the field bearing water (and the heathen liquors of that renegade Moor, Jose Cuervo), followed by the Great Officers, and the heralds, and the well-wishers, and the favor-seekers, and all the retinue that 'longeth to a sovereign. And the Crown declared that court would follow immediately after the Pelican's and Laurel's Circles. And so the machinery of state, after a single, giddy pause, ground reassuringly onward once more.

Court was held on the list-field that evening, bathed in the golden glow of torchlight and wreathed with the frosty breath of the multitudes (for it had once more grown quite cold). Sir Rowan was invested as Principessa Ansteorrae with all due ceremony, and she then called for Sir Hector in order to bestow upon him the Prince's Coronet. Yet as Hector approached the throne, so also did the members of the most Noble Order of the Pelican, who petitioned the Crown that His Grace be made a member of their order for his long and worthy service as Knight-Marshal to Ansteorra. When King Patrick asked His Grace, "Are you worthy to receive this honor?", Hector replied, "This is a question which I may never answer, 'Yes', but if these good gentles" here he bowed to the assembled Pelicans "ask that it be done, who am I to say, 'No'?" at which all agreed that this was a man fair-spoken, wise and noble; eminently worthy of all his honors, and more. And so the Crown granted the Pelicans' request, and raised Sir Hector to that estimable Order.

Then did Princess Rowan draw Sir Hector unto her, and in fair and loving words offered him the Coronet as he had done so twice to her, asking him if he would rule by her side as her equal in matters of state, as he already was in matters of love. To absolutely no one's surprise, His Grace most readily assented. As Princess Rowan placed the circlet upon his brow the populace loudly hailed the new Heirs to the Black Star's throne. And afterwards it was said, that there could not have been chosen a better Sovereign, or a better Consort, in all the Knowne Worlde.

Thus did her Grace, Duchess Rowan Beatrice von Kampfer, Knight, win by right of arms the Crown of Ansteorra. And that all these things are true, attests Master Cadfan ap Morgan Godrudd, Companion of the Order of the Laurel and Premier Bard of Ansteorra, who witnessed them that day, and by whose hand this account is writ.

VIVAT REX VIVAT REGINA VIVAT ANSTEORRA

A Brief Dream

...and then My Lord King fell to battle treachery...

I stood on a high hill and watched them strip him of all weapons by dignity.

Some whispered near me that now was my chance, turn the tide of the battle, win the day and to follow would be a reign to outshine that of Eleanor of Aquitaine.

Wincing in the sun, wiping the sweat from my breastplate, I thought and laughed slightly.

As great a woman as she was, I could never hope to equal her greatness. I had flaws within me which made me more human. I cared for frivolities. I loved a man and a country, in that order.

Giving the battle cry, I ran in front of the troops and they followed me to rescue the King.

BECOMING

By Lindoret of Byrnn Myrddin, Lochac

The softness of my gambeson, a cocoon,
That shields me from the chafing of leather and plate.
With each piece of armour, a tranquil feel of familiarity,
As my limbs become covered, I feel strong.
The musty smell of dried sweat and leather,
And the closeness of the armour prepares me.
A lull before the storm.
As I proudly arm my shield, my device looks fiercely out at me,
Raising my helm past memories of battles, tourneys, flood past
Victories, defeats, invulnerability.
I grasp my sword, an old friend feeling as one with my arm,
I am ready, the storm begins.

SHARK INFESTED WATERS

By Countess Cymber

Not too long ago, I had a dream. Not a daydream, or a vision filled with wishful thinking. The kind you have when you're asleep. Not surprising, since everyone has at least three separate dreams every normal sleeping period. I dream more vividly than most people, I'm told, so I normally remember one or two dreams every week, if I write them down, which I don't.

This dream was special. It was marked to be one I would remember, at first, because Sean Connery was in it. No, it wasn't that kind of dream. Besides, we were in Celtic Scotland and he was a Roman Centurion with a real nasty attitude. He was definitely not the kind to inspire feelings you would normally associate with the man.

Anyway, the reason I'm writing it down and sharing it with you is because of what it meant. Let me tell you the dream and then I'll tell you what I think it meant and why.

A lady fighter in my area and I have a lot in common. We aren't particularly close, but in this dream we were the same person for a while.

There was a pool, the chlorinated concrete kind you try to swim in or dive into. We were by the pool, a few of us, myself the only woman among several men. All of these men were known to me as SCA fighters. They would dive in the pool occasionally, swim about, then get out.

I was about to enter the water, when I spied movement toward the bottom of one corner. In the weird way dreams have, I could see the shark up close and personal without entering the pool.

It was a Tiger Shark. Quick, small and deadly, these sharks are among the few real man-eaters. In the dream, it was even more menacing than it would be in real life - if you can believe it. In it's small, razor tipped teeth, I could see bits of flesh hanging from them. Pieces of it's previous victims, I guessed.

Instantly, I was back on the concrete rim of the pool. I looked down with trepidation and decided it would not be wise to enter the water. The men with me paid no attention to the shark. They kept diving into the pool and swimming around.

I screamed at them that they were fools to ignore this very real threat. They ignored me and the shark.

The shark looked very hungry as a good friend of mine entered the clear water. He dove to the bottom, heedless of the shark that began to come for him. At the last possible minute, my friend splashed out of the pool. The shark actually came out of the water a foot or so in it's attempt to attack him.

My friend looked down at the ravenous shark as if it were harmless. The shark broke off the useless attack and went back down to lurk near the bottom.

At that moment, I looked up to see an instructor and a group of small children. The sixth sense one tends to have in certain dreams, told me that

they were here for a swim meet.

I looked at these helpless young boys and girls start to enter the water. I plucked the youngsters out of the pool as soon as they entered. The instructor yelled at me for interrupting the class.

Were these people morons or what?! I screamed at her, pointing to the shark, in hopes that she would see it. She did, but couldn't understand what my problem was.

"It's a shark, you idiot! It will kill them", I told her.

She looked at me like I had lost my mind. She had no idea why I thought it was so important that the children not go in the water.

In a fit of the all encompassing frustration dreams can generate, I pushed her and the kids out of the fence around the pool. My friends disappeared sometime back, so they couldn't help. I felt alone and at a loss to convince this woman and the children.

At that point, my husband spoke to me gently to get me up for work. I left the dream with a feeling that something was still unresolved.

At a fighter practice that weekend, I talked with the lady fighter who had shared my presence in he dream. She was quite interested in the beginning of the dream, as her persona is Celtic at the time of the period I dreamt about. When I told her of the rest of it, the part that still bothered me, she listened intently.

By the end of practice, we knew it had something to do with Crown Tourney. We were both fighting in it and it was only a week away. It began to bother us both that we couldn't figure out what the shark represented.

At Crown, we set up next to each other on the side lines. After stretching and before warming up, we spoke again of the perplexing dream. After a week since practice, we still had no idea what to make of the symbolism, but we knew it could be important.

We warmed up with each other, then with other fighters. While we were warming up, the first round was drawn. I had drawn first fight with a left handed fighter. Not a great type of opponent for a right handed madu fighter as his shield would almost incapacitate my best offence.

The fight was quick and I lost. It bothered me more than it would normally. This was Crown. Everyone wants to look their best, and I hadn't. I was very disappointed in myself. My husband tried to get me to blow it off, but the defeat wouldn't go away.

I sat under our shade pavilion and took off my helmet. I was adjusting the padding in it, when I heard my friend lament that her first draw was Duke Johann.

That's when it hit me!

"I know what the shark is!" I said.

She looked over to me.

"What?"

I tapped my chest armour. She nodded in understanding and donned her helmet.

My mind raced with the representations the dream had held for me. The shark represented self doubt and self defeatism. It may not be much of a problem for many fighters, but everyone has it. The flesh in it's teeth were parts of me it had bitten before.

Self doubt is always hungry.

Self defeatism always wants more.

If you play with the shark, the shark will bite you. If you don't play with the shark, it will leave you alone.

My next fight was up soon, I had to figure this out. I donned my helmet and confidence. The latter I had only recently picked up. I sang the litany I had found for myself based on an obscure song on a favored album. Just before I went to face my opponent, I left all inner conflict behind with a single phrase: *The shark is in the pool, right where I left him.*

With that confidence, I strode out to the field. We made our salutes and began to close. All thought went from my head except those pertaining to my opponent. As almost every fighter I meet, he was bigger and faster than I. He met me with his shield forward and his first blow on the way. I blocked a few, backing up. I thrust at him with my sword, over the top of his shield.

I one-shotted him.

Trying not to faint from shock, I saluted my fallen opponent and walked to my lord husband. It wasn't so much that I had killed someone with the only shot I threw. Surprising, but not shocking, I had done it before. But not in Crown Tournament, and not after losing my first fight.

Riding this tide of sudden confidence, my next fight I felled a much better fighter than myself. The next I lost, but through a bad habit I have with range games.

The lesson was there, and I was learning.

WOMENS' TOURNEY

The Third Annual Women's Tourney will be held at Pennsic XX!

For the third time this controversial list will be held to encourage women as participants in the art of heavy weapons combat! Everyone who has attended over the past two years, has enjoyed themselves thoroughly! Come and be a part of this women's fighting consortium!

Men are encouraged to offer their assistance in armor inspection, marshalling, field heraldry, list running and/or training but entrants for this list are restricted to *women only.*

Prizes will include *Most Chivalrous, First Place, Second Place, Best Death, Best-looking Armor and Lord's Choice.* Prizes are, as yet, undisclosed, but promise to be well worth the effort!

For more information, check for flyers on site at Pennsic and ads to appear in later publications of this newsletter!

Vixens' Keep™

Art	*H.L. William Blackfox*
Story & Script	*Master Cadfan ap Morgan, O.L.*
Story Editor	*Mistress Alanna of Caer du Pard, O.L.*
Story Consultants	*Mistress Catrin ferch Gwillym, O.L.* & *Soaba ni Siwnnach*

SYNOPSIS: Capt. Rose has discovered that Marphisa had been savagely beaten by her father for years, leaving a crazy quilt of scars on her back and a tangle of troubles in her mind. That evening, Rose formulates an exercise by which Marphisa's behavioral demons might be defeated. It is the next morning.

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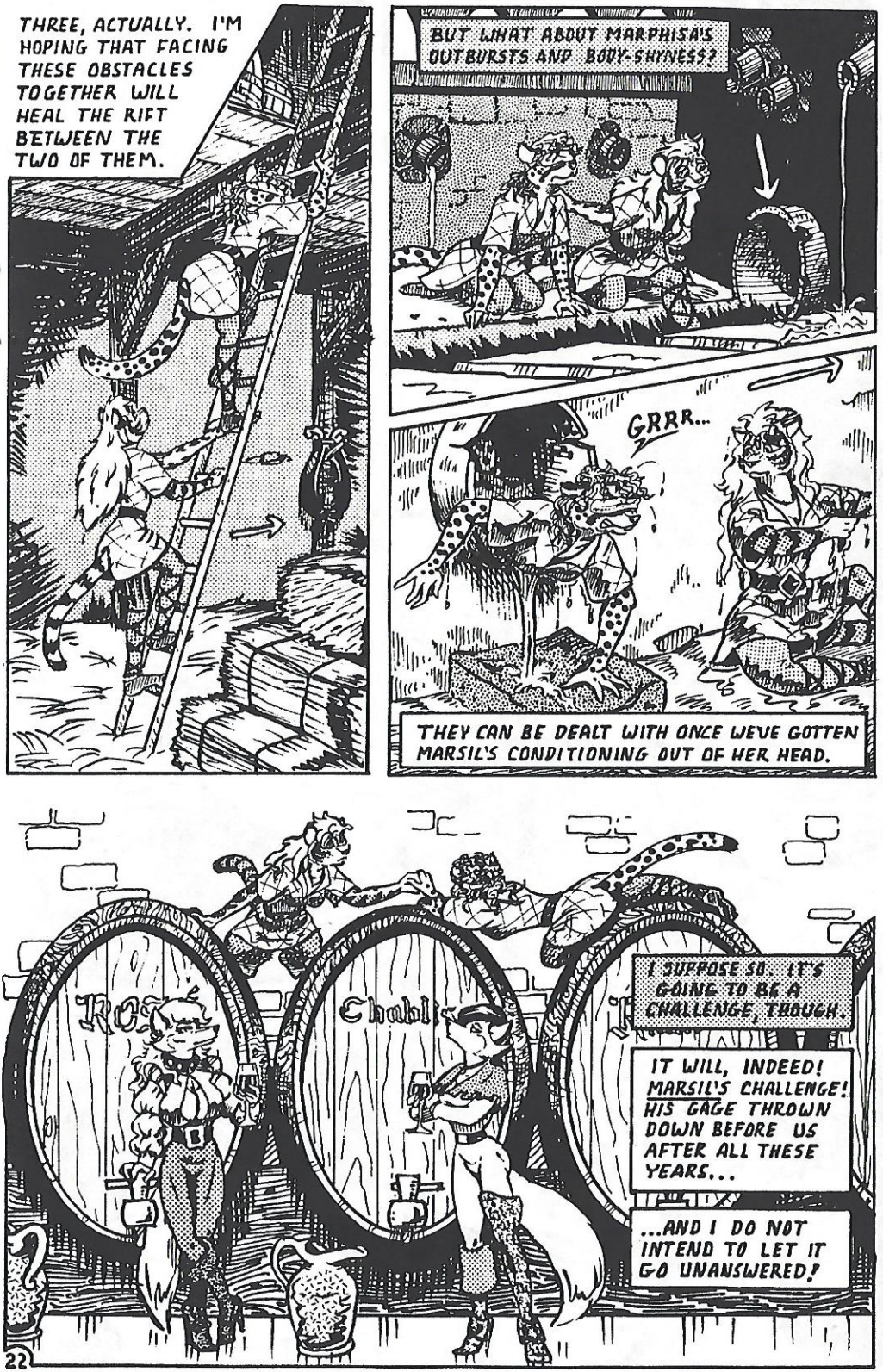
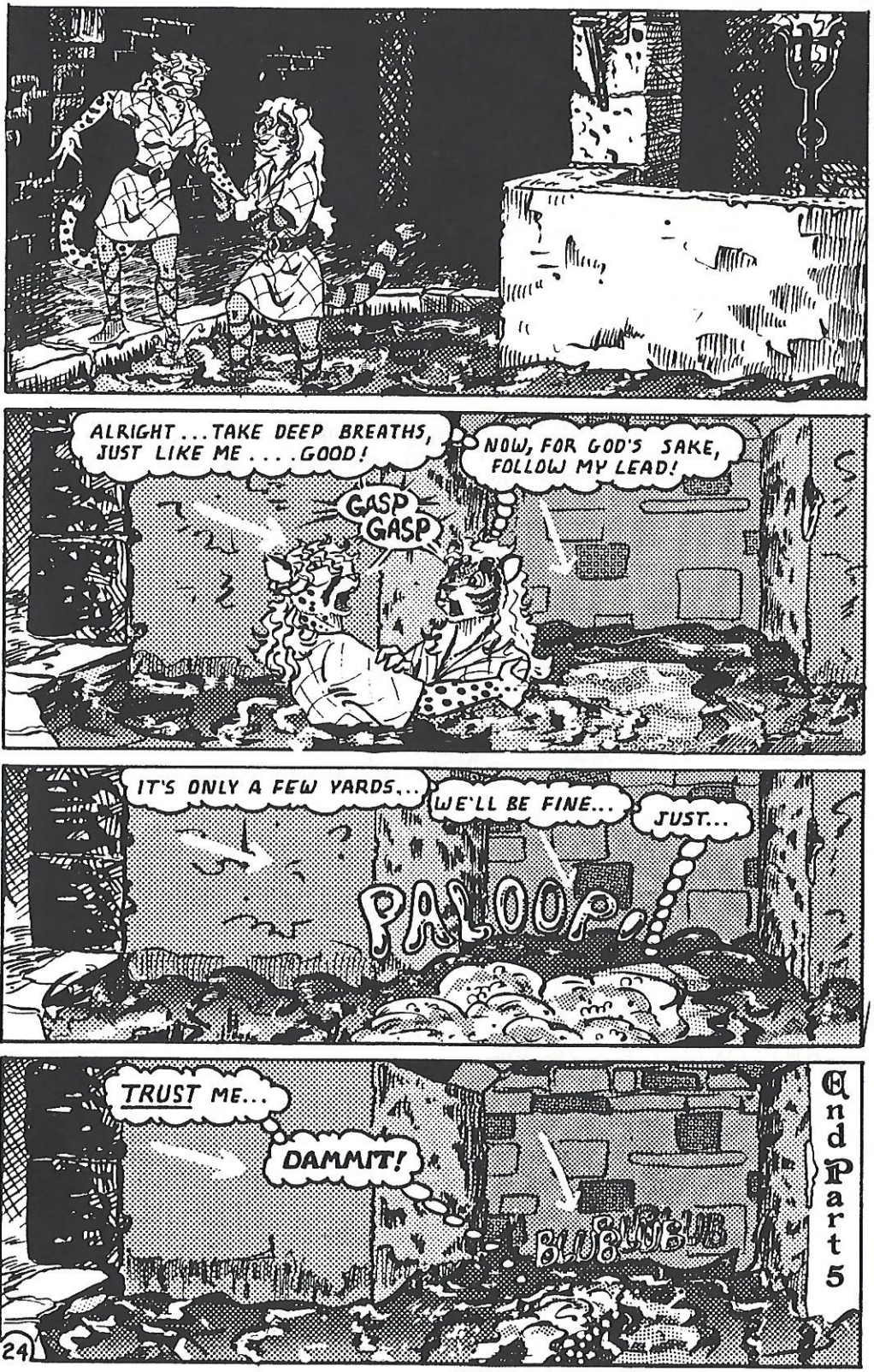
I DON'T UNDERSTAND! WHY AM I REQUIRED TO TAKE PART IN THIS EXERCISE? AFTER ALL, I WASN'T THE ONE WHO LOST CONTROL!
OH, BUT YOU DID, ALIX! YOU COULD SEE THAT SHE WAS EXHAUSTED, BEHAVING ABNORMALLY! YOU KNOW HER TEMPER BETTER THAN MOST OF US, BUT YOU STILL AGREED TO FIGHT HER!
MAYA WAS REQUIRED TO WARN YOU BOTH - WHICH SHE DID - BUT THE ULTIMATE DECISION WAS YOURS!
YOU LOST CONTROL OF THE SITUATION BEFORE IT BEGAN, ALIX. THEREFORE, PART OF THE BLAME FOR WHAT HAPPENED NEXT IS YOURS, TOO!
YOU NEED TO LEARN TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OTHERS, GIRL, AS WELL AS YOURSELF!
I SEE.
AND MAY I ASK THE CAPTAIN HOW THIS EXERCISE IS GOING TO TEACH ME THAT?
OH, YES! HOW COULD I HAVE FORGOTTEN TO MENTION...
MARPHISA WILL BE BLINDFOLDED, AND YOU, ALIX, SHALL GUIDE HER THROUGH THE CASTLE...
IN ABSOLUTE SILENCE!

IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE, IS IT, AUNT ROSE?
IT NEVER IS, SHAUNA DEAR. YOU KNOW MY METHODS.
LET ME SEE... ALIX NEEDS TO DEVELOP MORE CONFIDENCE IN HER ABILITY TO MAKE DECISIONS.
EXACTLY. OTHERWISE SHE'LL FOREVER BE EASILY SWAYED BY MORE FORCEFUL PERSONALITIES.
LIKE MARPHISA'S?
MM-HMM.
MARPHISA NEEDS TO LEARN THAT TRUSTING IN SOMEONE'S GUIDANCE DOESN'T NECESSARILY MAKE HER THEIR... THEIR...
..."WHIPPING-GIRL", SO TO SPEAK, SHAUNA.
MARPISA IS MORE THAN A LITTLE CONFUSED ABOUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LEADER AND A TYRANT— AS WAS HER FATHER.
SO YOU'RE SPLITTING TWO WANDS WITH ONE BOLT, AUNT ROSE?


THREE, ACTUALLY. I'M HOPING THAT FACING THESE OBSTACLES TOGETHER WILL HEAL THE RIFT BETWEEN THE TWO OF THEM.
BUT WHAT ABOUT MARPHISA'S OUTBURSTS AND BODY-SHYNESS?
GRRR...
THEY CAN BE DEALT WITH ONCE WE'VE GOTTEN MARSIL'S CONDITIONING OUT OF HER HEAD.
I SUPPOSE SO. IT'S GOING TO BE A CHALLENGE, THOUGH.
IT WILL, INDEED! MARSIL'S CHALLENGE! HIS GAGE THROWN DOWN BEFORE US AFTER ALL THESE YEARS...
...AND I DO NOT INTEND TO LET IT GO UNANSWERED!

WHEW! AND I THOUGHT THIS PLACE LOOKED BIG FROM THE OUTSIDE!
AHA! DAYLIGHT AT LAST! THAT MUST MEAN...
HUH?
OH, CLEVER... VERY CLEVER!
WELL, M'LADY SCOURGE-OF-THE-DESERT, I HOPE YOU'VE LEARNED TO HOLD YOUR BREATH UNDER WATER.
AT LEAST YOU WON'T HAVE TO FOR LONG.
BUT...
HOW DO I TELL YOU THAT?


ALRIGHT...TAKE DEEP BREATHS, JUST LIKE ME....GOOD!
NOW, FOR GOD'S SAKE, FOLLOW MY LEAD!
GASP GASP
IT'S ONLY A FEW YARDS...
WE'LL BE FINE...
JUST...
PALOOP...
TRUST ME...
DAMMIT!
BUBBLE
End Part 5

Caricatures by Blackfox by Mail

Order Form

MUNDANE NAME _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY_____ STATE_____ ZIP_____

EACH PERSON IN THIS DRAWING MUST PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING:

1.) At least two (2) color photographs clearly showing the subject's face, ideally from two different angles.

2.) At least one (1) color photograph showing the garb in which the subject wishes to be drawn.

3.) In the case of multiple subjects, at least one (1) photo showing their relative heights. (This may be one of the previously requested photos.)

Every effort will be made to return all photos, but I make no guarantees.
Please do not send irreplaceable photos (try sending color xeroxes).

EACH PERSON TO APPEAR IN THIS DRAWING MUST ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

A.) Do you personally identify with any species of animal, breed of dog or cat, type of bird or reptile, type of mythological beast (within reason)?

B.) Did you pick a beast for your heraldic device with which you identify?

C.) Please avoid choosing any form of domesticated cattle or goats. Domestic sheep and horses are acceptable.

D.) Please avoid choosing apes or monkeys. I will use them if I am given sufficient reason and can see the resemblance in photos. I reserve the right to refuse to do a drawing if I suspect that a drawing is being done as an insult to the subject.

PLEASE PRINT YOUR SOCIETY NAME(S) HERE. INDICATE PEERAGES, TITLES, ETC.:

FIRST PERSON_____

SECOND PERSON_____

(For more subjects, please use another sheet.)

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR ANIMAL CHOICES HERE:

	FIRST CHOICE	SECOND CHOICE
FIRST PERSON	_____ /	_____
SECOND PERSON	_____ /	_____

(For more subjects, please use another sheet.)

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GRANUAILE Part II

Seamus Donn
Lough Devnaree (Ireland)

Grainne was no stranger to danger and prized courage and valor. Her contempt for cowardice is told in one tale of when she was fighting the Stauntons of Kinturk castle. Apparently in the midst of battle her son Tibbot faltered and drew back to shelter behind his mother. 'An ag iarraidh dul i bhfolach ar mo thòin' ('Is is trying to hide behind my backside you are -- the place you came from?') she asked. Thus mortified he stood his ground and the Stauntons eventually surrendered. Each family in the region was levied a barrel of meal, a pig and an ox.

In 1577 while raiding the Earl of Desmond she was captured for the first time. She was handed over to the President of Munster, the Lord Justice Drury who wrote

> Grany O'Mayle, a woman that hath impudently passed the part of womanhood and been a great spoiler, and chief commander and director of thieves and murderers at sea to spoille this province, having been apprehended by the Earle of Desmond this last year, his Lordship hath now sent her to Lymrick where she remains in safe keeping.

Later she was transferred to the dungeons of Dublin castle, demonstrating her importance as a prisoner. Very few thus incarcerated live long but by whatever means Grainne was set free to return to Connaught with a promise of good behaviour.

On the 24th of November 1580 The MacWilliam died. After a brief scuffle and negotiations Richard-an-Iarainn was installed and was later knighted in 1581. This put Grainne into a new role of power and amongst the other wives at one gathering she was singled out "among them Grany O'Malley is one and thinketh herself to be no small lady".

But on 30th of April, 1583, Richard died, surprisingly of natural causes. Grainne wasted no time and 'gathered together all her own followers and with 1,000 head of cows and mares departed and became a dweller in Carrikahowley in Borosowle'. Having been cheated of her right to one-third her first husband's estate she established her claim simply by taking it.

Sir Nicholas Malby, Governor of Connaught, died on 3rd March 1584. He was replaced by Sir Richard Bingham who was all but dedicated to the eradication of the Gaelic way of life by force. The main conflict was how succession was governed. In the Brehon laws the highest ranks of the clan elected a tainist who would succeed the chieftain upon his death. English law, in theory, was strictly from father to son. In practice the English government parcelled the land out as they saw fit and Bingham saw fit to remove the whole idea of clan and chieftain with English feudalism.

It was in such a post-succession scuffle in 1586 that Bingham managed to capture her and

> she was apprehended and tied with a rope, both she and her followers at that instant were spoiled of their said cattle and of all that ever they had besides the same, and brought to Sir Richard who caused a new pair of gallows to be made for her last funeral where she thought to end her days

Giving over her son-in-law, 'Devil's Hook' she was allowed to go but Bingham had taken over 1,000 cattle and horses which were her livelihood. She, herself, gives an account of the brutal treatment he enforced upon her son

> The said Owen, according to Sir Richard's special direction, did withdraw himself, his followers and tenants, with all their goods and cattle into a strong

island, for their more and better assurance. There have been sent against the said rebels 500 soldiers, under the leading of Captain John Bingham, appointed by his brother Sir Richard Bingham as his lieutenant in those parts, when they missed both the rebels and their cattle, they came to the mainland right against the said island calling for victuals, whereupon the said Owen came forth with a number of boats and ferried all the soldiers into the island, where they were entertained with the best cheer they had. That night the said Owen was apprehended and tied with a rope with 18 of his chief followers; in the morning the soldiers drew out of the island four thousand cows, five hundred stud mares and horses and a thousand sheep, leaving the remainder of the poor men naked within the island, [they] came with the cattle and prisoners to Bally-ne-heussy aforesaid, where John Bingham aforesaid stayed for their coming; that evening he caused the said 18 persons, without trial or good cause, to be hanged, among them was hanged a gentleman of land and living, called Thebault O-Tool, being of the age of four score and ten years. The next night following, a false alarm was raised in the camp in the dead of the night, the said Owen being fast bound in the cabin of Grene O'Molloy, and at that instant the said Owen was cruelly murdered, having 12 deadly wounds, and in that miserable sort he ended his years and unfortunate days.

For the next several years one rebellion followed another. The MacWilliamship was abolished, reinstated in rebellion and abolished again. The O'Malley fleet was instrumental here as a fast transport of troops. She was a sufficient force to move Bingham to describe her as 'a notable traitoress and nurse to all rebellions in the Province for 40 years'.

Even her son, Murrough O'Flaherty sided with Bingham against her at one point. Bingham relates how thus infuriated

his aforesaid Mother Grany (being out of charety with her sonne for serving her Matie:) manned out her Navy of Gallyes and landed in Ballinehenchie where he swellethe, burned his Towen and spoiled his people of their Cattayle and goods and murdered 3 or 4 of his men which offered to make resistance.

Having destroyed her livelihood on land Bingham sought to suppress her ability to live by the sea. It is probably this that moved Grainne into a more political arena. In July 1593 she petitioned the Queen:

In most humble wise showeth unto your most excellent Majesty; your loyal and faithful subject Grany Ne Mailly of Connaught in you Highness realm of Ireland that where by means of the continual discord stirs and dissention which heretofore long time remained among the Irish especially in West Connaught by the sea-side, every cheiftain for his safeguard and maintainance and for the defence of his people, followers and country took arms by strong hand to make head against his neighbours, who in like manner constrained your highness fond subject to take arms and by force to maintain herself and her people by sea and land the space of forty years past.

In this very opening she justifies her actions and hints of the Queen's inability to keep order in the province. A bold way to start a letter asking for the pardon for her two sons and 'in tender consideration whereof and in regard of her great age, she most humbly beseeches your majesty of your princely bounty and liberality to grant her some reasonable maintenance for the little time she has to live.' Notwithstanding her 'great age' she

then asks

> to grant unto your said subject under your most gracious hand of signet, free liberty during her life to invade with sword and fire all your highness enemies, wheresoever they are or shall be, without any interruption of any person or persons whatsoever.

Clearly a clever bid to get around the restrictions on her activity imposed by Bingham.

The Queen responded by sending 18 'Articles of Interrogatory', a list of questions to be answered by her. These questions and her answers are preserved in the English State Papers and provide a very clear picture of how Grainne saw herself and the circumstances she was in.

Before there could be any reply from the Queen, Bingham arrested both her son and her brother. During late July, 1593, she herself sailed to London to petition the Queen. This was a very daring move. Few Irish chieftains would risk setting foot on English soil, especially those with as chequered reputations as Granuaile.

There is no record of what her reactions to the English were or of them to her. One can image few places as different as the grey tower of Rockfleet by the north Atlantic and colour and splendour of the Elizabethan court. Chambers describes the differences as

> Tapestry-covered walls, carved oak wainscots and furniture, ceilings ornate with intricate plaster-work; the long corridors leading to the royal apartments humming with the subdued and modulated tones of courtiers, emissaries, petitioners and many fair and fragile court ladies in exquisite dress and shining jewels, powdered and coifed like tropical birds, flitting hither and thither trading the latest court gossip. And among this gathering, Grace O'Malley, leader of men, seawoman without equal, pirate, trader, self-appointed ruler contrary to law and tradition but too powerful to be dethroned, an elderly woman whose lined and weather-beaten face proclaimed the harsh conditions of her trade.

Upon hearing the Grainne had gone to court Bingham had sent a letter denoucing her again as a 'notable traitour'. There is no doubt that Grainne excelled herself in her meeting with Elizabeth. Shortly after the meeting, on the 6th of September 1593 the Queen wrote to Bingham:

> Where our Treazurer of England, by his letters in July last, did inform you of the being here of three several persons of that our Province of Connaught under your charge, that is, of Sir Morogh O'Flaherty, Knight, Grany ne Maly and Roobuck French requiring to understand your opinion of every of them concerning their suits; we perceive by your late letters of answer what your opinion is of them, and their causes of complaint or of suit, whereof you have given them no just cause. But where Grany ne Maly hath made humble suit to us for our favour towards her sons, Morogh O'Flaherty and Tibbott Burk, and to her brother Donell O'Piper, that they might be at liberty, we perceive by your letters that her eldest son, Morogh O'Flaherty, is no trouble but is a principal man of his country, and as a dutiful subject hath served us when his mother, being them accompanied with a number of disorderly persons, did with her 'gallyes' despoil him; and therefore by you favoured, and so we wish you to continue. But the second son, Tibbott Burk, one that hath been brought up civilly with your brother and can speak English, is by you justly

detained because he hath been accused to have written a letter to Bryan O'Rork, the late traitor's son, though it cannot be fully proved but is by him utterly denied; and for her brother Donald, he hath been imprisoned 7 months past, being charged to have been in company of certain that killed some soldiers in a ward. But for those two you think they may be both dismissed upon bonds for their good behaviour, wherewith we are content, so as the old woman may understand we yield thereto in regard of her humble suit; so she is hereof informed and departeth with great thankfulness and with many more earnest promises that she will, as long as she lives continue a dutiful subject, yea, and will employ all her power to offend and prosecute any offender against us. And further, for the pity to be had of this aged woman, having not by the custom of the Irish any title to any livelihood or position of portion of her two husband's lands, now being a widow; and yet her sones enjoying their father's lands, we require you to deal with her sons in our name to yield to her some maintainance for her living the rest of her old years, which you may with persuasion assure them that we shall theirin allow of them; and you also shall with your favour in all their good causes protect them to live in peace to enjoy their livelihoods. And this we do write in her favour as she showeth herself dutiful, although she hath in former times lived out of order, as being charged by our Treasurer with the evil usage of her son that served us dutifully. She hath confessed the same with assured promises by oath to continue most dutiful, with offer, after her aforesaid manner, and that she will fight in our quarrel with all the world.

A full success on all points. And most notably without the usual sureties or pledges extracted from petitioners.

Bingham first sought to get around these orders through inaction but evidently Grainne threatened and he relates in a letter to Lord Burghley on the 24th of November, 'I have enlarged Grany O'Malley, her son Tibbot and brother Donell na Pipee, upon such slender sureties as they gave us, the woman urging it some importunely swering that she would elles repair presently to England.'

Grainne put to sea again under the guise of continuing the Queen's 'quarrel with all the world'. Her son and brother were released. Bingham, having fought her so hard for many years, did not want to see her return to her old ways. Contrary to the laws of the Composition he forced her to billet an oppressive number of soldiers and ordered Captain Strittas and a company of soldiers to accompany her on all sea voyages.

This and whatever other hardships he subjected her to finally caused her to flee to Munster in late 1594 or early 1595 where she stayed with an old acquaintance Thomas, Earl of Ormond. Having some influence at court he lent his weight to another petition. There is no recorded reply to either that or a later petition. Eventually she returned to Rockfleet.

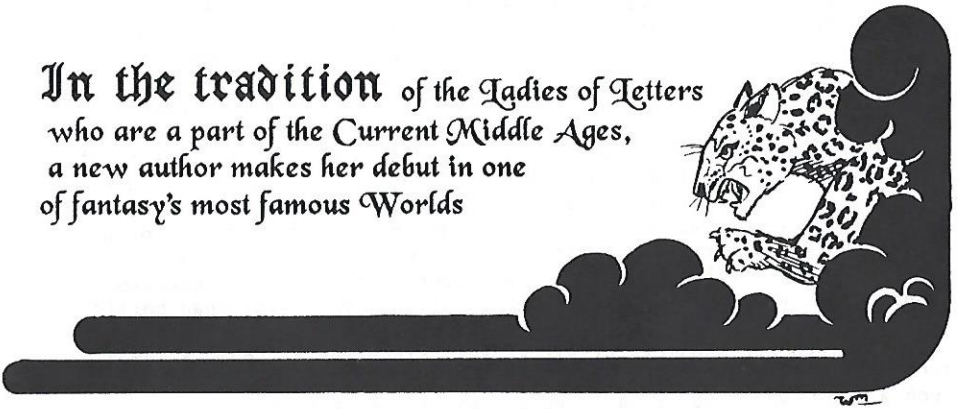
The O'Neill and The O'Donnell were engaged in active war with the crown during the last half of the decade. Survival was at a premium and raiding was commonplace. The Dean of Limerick reported 'MacNeil of Barra and Grany ny Mallye invaded one another's possessions though far distant'.

Her son Tibbot was the main force amongst her relations and fought on the side of the new English governor of Connaught, Sir Conyers Clifford. They proved themselves well and he that he had 'given him (Tibbot), his mother and brother amongst them in money and other necessaries, £200' for their valuable services by sea.

In late 1598 there was a substantial English defeat and Grainne's own lands were overrun. In 1600 O'Neill and O'Donnell had Connaught and nearly the entire of Munster in their hands and help from Spain seemed imminent. The turning point came in May when Henry Docwra landed on the Foyle with 4000 troops being O'Neill lines. Mountjoy and Carew attacked Ulster and Munster, destroying everything in their path.

There is only one more recorded account of Granuaile, that of an English patrol overcoming one of her galleys on its way to plunder the McSweeneys. It is thought she died in Rockfleet castle about the year 1603 and possible lived just long enough to hear of the defeat of her one time friends O'Neill and O'Donnell at the battle of Kinsale.

She had seen in her life the end of the Gaelic order and Brehon system of laws. In learning to survive in the changing times of Chieftains and Earls she had played many cards. It is told that she was fond of gambling and risk taking. Her life would seem to support this. It is sad to note that the records we have of her are almost exclusively from the English State Papers. She does not appear in the Annals of Ireland whether through being eclipsed by the many other notable events of her time or through a disregard for her sex it is uncertain. But with the legendary precedent of Maeve, Queen of Connaught, one wonders how many other women leaders of Ireland have also been overlooked.



Lisa Woodworth, a longtime member of the SCA, has made her professional writing debut in the latest anthology of shared-world stories set in Andre Norton's famous Witch World.

Lisa's story of a were-lady fleeing a mysterious hunter is part of a fascinating collection of stories written by established fantasy authors and talented newcomers. Together, they create new legends in one of fantasy's most enduring settings.

Tales of the Witch World 3

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BOOK REVIEW

Antonia Fraser. 1988. The Warrior Queens. New York: Vintage Books (383pp).
A review by Maistréas Aeruin ní hEaráin O'Chonemara

Sometimes when I prowl the local bookstores, specific books seem to suggest I take them home and read them at some time in the future. This one jumped off the shelf at me and shouted "read me NOW" so loudly I'd finished the first chapter before walking out of the store. For any female aspiring to a leadership position in a field dominated by men, this book presents a historical analysis of "the legends and the lives of the women who have led their nations in war," as stated in the book's subtitle. Best part of it, for those of us in the SCA, most of the biographies presented and analyzed here are from women in the SCA's time frame, or well-known examples that predate our period of study. And for those of us Celts, Picts, and Brits, the centerpiece to this work is both the legendary and the real Boadicea/Boudica, Queen of the Iceni and leader of the rebellion against Rome in AD 60/61 (depending on which account one reads first).

Ms. Fraser defines a Warior Queen in the historical context as one who combined both elements of rule and martial leadership. By this definition, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher at the time of the Falklands War played the Warrior Queen since it was her decision to deploy the troops, while HRM Elizabeth II was only the reigning monarch. Harriet Tubman and Joan of Arc were responsible for leading military engagements in their respective time periods, but since neither was a ruler, they don't quite fit the category. Besides Boudica, the reader will meet several famous/infamous ladies (some of which I'll admit I hadn't heard of before I found this book) such as Zenobia, the third-century Queen of Palmyra, Matilda Countess of Tuscany, Empress Maud of England and Germany, Queen Tamara of Georgia, Queen Isabella of Castile, the first Queen Elizabeth of England, and several others. Each is presented with solidly documented accounts (25 pages of footnotes!), outlining her tenure and actions, as well as how she has influenced history - or been influenced by history, and turned into a legend that may be radically different from the known facts. The accounts are not only accurate, but enjoyable as well, and tied together by several well-explained motifs. These include the Warrior Queen as an "honorary male," supposedly 'better' than her subjects of either sex, since she as 'only a woman' succeeded where other men failed. It also includes the premise that such a woman would be sexually voracious; conversely, but not contradictorily, another theme will be found pertaining to her chastity, maintained under the most remarkable circumstances - against all available evidence! Historically, sometimes the same woman bears both accusations simultaneously, depending on which side of the conflict was recording the chronicle. Other themes include the Holy(and sometimes Armed) Figurehead, the Appendage Syndrome where the lady is connected to the nearest available strong masculine figure, the Shame Syndrome whereby all surrounding masculine figures are described as failing in courage compared to the queen, and the Tomboy Syndrome, where the woman's chosen interests since childhood have followed traditionally male pursuits.

One of the best parts of this book was how Ms.Fraser presented each person in her own historical context, in an unbiased manner. Where there are holes in the evidence, she points them out to the reader lest one should believe things were left out of an account because they presented an unflattering picture of a particular heroine. Where accounts contradict each other, this is specifically mentioned. And, where the passage of time has altered perceptions, this is also noted.

Boudica's story serves as an excellent example of these points, since it seems nearly all of the motifs apply to her. For the details devoted to this biography alone, I would have bought the book - but then again, my first encounter with the legend of the infamous Boadicea was all I needed to convince myself that fighting was period for me, no matter what anyone else said. The entire book does a good job at making legendary women into real, historical people, each with different motivations for her behavior in a wartime situation. Every woman who fights, or plans to fight in the future, should read this book. That way, when your opponents compare you to that tall redhead standing aloft in her knife-wheeled chariot on the banks of the Thames River, you'll really know what they meant to say.

SUGGESTED READING

Bullfinch, T. 1970 (and earlier editions). Bullfinch's Mythology.
A classic text since the author's death in 1867, it contains stories from a number of places and ages useful to someone studying women's roles in society. Broad and non-specific for the most part, but everybody has to know "the basics" before being ready for harder thoughts.

Robert Graves. 1948. The White Goddess. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
Not easy reading, but again a classic text, this time more specific to women's study.

Sir James George Frazer. 1922. The Golden Bough. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.
If you thought Graves was tough, try this piece of convoluted Victorian literature! Another required classic in women's studies.

James Bonwick. 1986 (originally published 1894). Irish druids and old Irish religions. New York: Dorset Press.
Yet another Victorian convoluted text; draws lots of comparisons between Irish and Greek roles for women.

Jean Markale. 1986. Women of the celts. Rochester: Inner Traditions Int. Ltd.
More comparisons on Celtic and Greek women.

Merlin Stone. 1986. When God was a woman. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovich, Pubs.
Thoroughly researched and well-explained. Good references. Decent pictures, too.

I wanted you to know that, yes, I read the editorial. My own experience has been brief but, for what it is worth, I have been welcomed as a fighter in Caerthe, and the Outlands, with open arms! No one could be more amazed and delighted than I was at the training and encouragement that I have received, most of all from the men and the Amazons. I have been assured by both yourself and your Lord that this is how ALL fighters should be treated; I, however, have enough 20th century skepticism to realize that what "ought to be" seldom always is. In mundanity I have encountered extreme prejudice against women in some of my endeavors, and am therefore grateful for the chivalry shown me.

I, however, am guilty of my share of complaining about injustices done to me (off the field), and identified with the "lady" of your tale. I really am new. My first event was the end of January. Because National had a hard time figuring our my unusual application (don't ask), my card didn't arrive until May, when I also received a Baronial office! I have very few people who I can ask for advice that is not prejudiced in some form. Also, I am fast discovering that there is a network of politics under-lying much of how and what is done, one that I am ignorant of completely! I'm sorry this "lady" didn't take your advice, but maybe the problem is more that she didn't really know how and whom to come to with the problem in the first place. Is sounds like it has now become a personal crusade and those are usually caused NOT by a total commitment to the rightness of the cause, but frustration!

Who else do your turn to? And do you stop if you feel your are right, even though the whole Known World is against you? Unfortunately, not enough of us do know that patience, directness, and compromise are often the best form of valor! I am a newbie who lacks confidence, so instead of going directly to the person and working it out, I chose the long road of asking for, and getting, a confusing myriad of advice! Yes, Cymber, some of it I ignored, and the problem festered and grew. Eventually, I found talking it out with the offending person, be it opponent or Superior Officer or fellow player — even if it comes to shouts — is the only way.

If you do so, and really listen, you often can see where you, yourself, were wrong, and the other party often has a new light on how you see things. It is best NOT to do this when you're angry, because it is easier to be calm, rational, and really hear the other person without a boiling temper — you are less likely to say some things you'll really regret later. Some things must be overlooked, and you go on with your life. When it gets to be too much, step away from it for a while; time usually gives you a fresh perspective. After all, is it really going to matter twenty years from now?

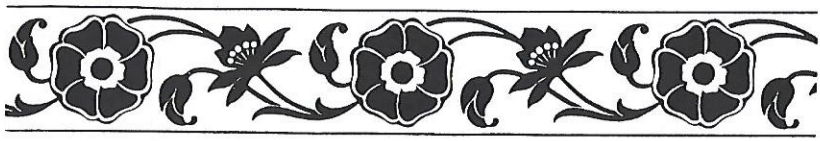
These bits of sage wisdom were given to me, after much frustration and misunderstanding on my part, over some of my complaints. Yes, I was guilty of some mental rhinohiding but a person I really respect — because she didn't write me off as a looney — helped me out before the situation got so bad I had spread it across the kingdom. Her name is Lady Francesca di Pavia. I am positive from your editorial that you attempted to do for this "lady" what Lady Francesca did for me. You cannot, however, force someone to listen — and it gets tougher as the problem festers for the recipient to ask advice, because, by then, emotion and frustration are no longer in

proportion to the real problem! If she indeed is making a bad reputation for herself, I am sorry. There are certainly ways to discuss rhinohiding with those you feel are displaying it, in a civilized manner. There are also some fine fighting trainers out there who can teach you both how to take and judge blows, whether you are male or female.

I know a lot of people who have left the SCA over tempests that began as minor misunderstandings, and I hate to see that happen. (I'm still idealistic enough to want our New Middle Ages to be the best of all possible worlds for everyone in it!) Where is the SCA version of Dear Ann Landers? Who can give the uninformed the word? The answer is in each of us, as quickly as possible, to identify and solve the problems as they arise (but, as much as possible, without dragging in our own politics and prejudices)! Here is where we need the experienced and gentle to take the lead! The word is to deal direct, do it soon, be fair, and listen!

But dear and generous Cymber, all you can do is still all you can do. I am sad that your advice was belittled. I am sad that your name and your newsletter got dragged into this person's fight. As a new fighter, I hope you will continue to be there for those of us who need advice! I also hope that I, and others who make appeals to your, out of respect for your experience and your consideration of our situations, will have the wisdom to heed your words.

Adelheidauf Adelar - Outlands



At an event recently, I was introduced to the Flower of Souvenance and was entranced with the idea of a publication for fighters particularly females.

I have been fighting broadsword and shield for almost 10 years off and on in Rowany (Sydney Australia), and have observed the coming and going of many. I am relating to you, my observations and apologize if these points have been raised in previous FOS.

In Lochac, I have observed that females have a tendency to use a great sword in preference to a weapon and shield. I suspect this is due to encouragement by male fighters to do so as they believe that a female would be unable to manage the weight of a shield. Somehow I wonder if you can't manage a shield, how can you deal good blows with a great weapon?

In Lochac, recruiting new female fighters has been difficult. There are many possible reasons for this, is the situation similar in the West? Many women are simply not interested or the prospect of possible injury discourages them before they start. Role relationships come into play also. Many single women consider it unfeminine to be in armour and many males encourage this perspective.

There do exist male fighters that openly discourage female fighters by refusing to fight them. Also refusing to accept blows dealt to them by a

woman as "a Lady couldn't possibly hit hard enough." Some men try the soft approach of pulling their blows, not targeting certain areas of the body so as not to injure the "frail" lady. I feel the best opponent is that which treats you as a fighter, neither male or female. It can be fun when they don't realize your sex until you speak to them or remove your helm. I believe women fighters should be neither victimized nor patronized but treated as what they are, fighters.

Other factors which may influence recruitment is the lack of comraderie, information and difficulty getting safe fitting armor. I have found in tourney and wars with male fighters, there exists a special acceptance, friendship, -comraderie being part of something. Other fighters may encourage you and make you feel an important part of their side, but this falls down between lady fighters, why? Shouldn't we be encouraging other ladies to fight?, sharing our triumph and defeat? It seems to me the competition is most fierce between two ladies and rather than encouraging each other we end up as opponents.

As to problems related to information and armoring, I am most interested in the FOS as it is a most needed resource. I am encouraging other female fighters to read your articles and subscribe. There is difficulty getting safe workable armour for ladies made here as few patterns exist, and my experience is that armorers are hesitant to make armour in small sizes. Many pieces of armour I have commissioned ended up too heavy, too long or too wide and had to be given away or sold to another fighter. Therefore I am most interested in armour information in the FOS - Could there be more of it, please?

As a mother of a 14 month old boy, I am also interested in hearing from other "mother" fighters. Some months ago, I entered a tourney, had a lot of fun, while my husband (a knight - never marry a knight if you want to fight) minded our son. It caused quite a stir when after fighting a while, I took a break, removed my breastplate and gave my son a feed!

I would discourage any pregnant ladies from fighting or even training. For the baby's protection and your own. During pregnancy, ligaments soften, your weight bearing changes and your stomach muscles have enough to contend with. Certainly keep fit whilst pregnant, but in exercises like swimming, etc. Also, after the baby is born, it takes a while for your body to return to normal.

If you are breast-feeding, you need to be particularly careful about breast protection. An ill-fitting breastplate can compress milk ducts leading to mastitis or worse. You must consider that your breast size will be considerably increased for some time after you have the baby, so your previous breast plate will not fit properly. It may be worth borrowing or making larger breast protection. If you do have pain after a blow to the breast, if possible, try feeding your baby. It may ease some of the swelling and keep the ducts patent.

Lindoret of Byrnn Myrddin - Lochac

Flower of Soubenance
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