

## My Search For A Laurel

by Gunnarr Inn Hviti

I had decided to take a solid year off from fighting and try Arts & Sciences for serious (having never done A&S except as a way to make something for fighting). My interest is period performance magic, so I wanted a laurel who could give me advice on how to maybe deal with speaking in public, or how best to present my skills etc (since magic is not your typical 'look how it's made' art).

The only Laurel I knew by name was the Baron of South Downs, Lorenzo Petrucci, who I knew did dance and a lot of other stuff. So I approached him. He had a full plate, and suggested I go find \*his\* Laurel, one "Orlando, in Bryn Madoc". I was looking up "Orlando of Bryn Madoc" (spelled exactly that way) and having no luck, when someone said "You mean Orlando, the \*\*Baron\*\* of Bryn Madoc?"

(light bulb goes on, and Gunnarr logic flashes...'well of course, if he was a laurel to the baron of South Downs, it stands to reason he'd be a Baron in Bryn Madoc too, right?')

Off I go to try and approach Orlando about this Laurel thing, and I'm super nervous because I have never spoken a word to the man, and I have no pedigree to offer him. At Gulf Wars I finally manage to get Orlando, me, and my courage all together at the same time, and go over to the Bryn Madoc camp at Gulf Wars to make my pitch.

About 30 seconds before I talk to Orlando, Alexander Medina tries to calm my nerves and he tells me "He's a great guy, he's easy to talk to, relax, it's not like talking to the Crown in court, of course he's been Crown three times so he's a Duke but he's a cool Duke, and he won't mind if you call him Excellency because he's also the Baron, or you can call him Sir because he's also a Knight, but there's really no reason to be all...you OK bro, you look like you're going to throw up?"

As 'speeches to calm a nervous applicant' go, it was not the best. I stuttered and stammered and fidgeted and was a total nervous wreck. I remember Orlando saying "well we will give it a try for a little while, then decide if it's something we both want to enter into" and then me fleeing back to my camp, convinced I had blown it.

I'm happy to say he accepted me as a minion, and for the next year or so I kept learning tidbits here and there about my Knight and Laurel - usually prefaced by the person saying "Oh, I thought you knew? He's also the first to (fill in the blank) and win the (filling the blank) award (etc)"

Had I known \*\*his\*\* pedigree before Gulf Wars, I doubt that I would have had the nerve to approach him at all.

On the day he officially announced our association, it was the Golden Lily event. He asked me

"Do you mind if we make it kind of quick and simple, as I have some other court business to attend to - someone we have been wanting to give an award to for some time, but keep missing them, and this needs to get done."

I told him that was fine, I didn't need a lot of ceremony, I needed a Laurel for advice and guidance (lol). So he went up to the front of court to take care of the long overdue award, and his wife and I stood at the back of the seated crowd, awaiting the brief moment of business to come. The award thing took a little longer than expected (he is a very eloquent person when he chooses to speak on something like an award), and after he was done, he started to exit the court.

Mathias Blackett was the court Herald and knew that I was on the schedule to be announced as Orlando's new minion, so he called out "Um, excuse me Your Grace, wasn't there some other piece of court business you needed to handle?"

Orlando paused with a puzzled look, shook his head no, and resumed leaving court.

Mathias tried again "Something involving a belt, perhaps?"

Orlando paused again, looking at his wife and I. She is pointing at me and mouthing something in Italian (I think). I'm doing the "crestfallen minion who was declined at the last minute" look (because I thought he changed his mind at the last second).

Orlando suddenly remembers, turns a nice shade of pink and returns to the front of the court, saying "Now that you mention it, there is..." (Everyone else thought he was just doing court shtick)

He called me up and gave a short speech about 'this is my new Apprentice, anything he does wrong you let me know, anything he does right, you let me know,' and so forth. Only he kept calling me "Gunther" instead of "Gunnarr". In the back of the court, his wife is covering her eyes and shaking her head slowly with a pained look. I'm pretty sure she was muttering something in Italian, but i was up in front trying to look like a worthy new Apprentice.

When we walked out of court together, he asked his wife "What? What is wrong? What did I do now?"

"You kept saying his name wrong," she said.

"What did I say?"

"You called him Gunther!"

"OK, so?"

"His name is GUNNARR!"

He looks appropriately horrified, then grins and says "Well Gunther is kind of like Gunnarr, right?"

She covered her eyes again (definitely muttering something in Italian).

I looked at him and said "No problem, I'll just call you Disney from now on."

He looks at me and says "Disney? Why?"

I said "Well, Disney is kind of like Orlando..."

He boggled for a moment, then burst out laughing, as did his wife.

Since that day, he's always gotten my name right, and I've never called him Disney, except to retell this story.