

THE NEGOTIATIONS OF MEDIEVAL MARRIAGE

a 1-minute play

By Tom Smith

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THE NEGOTIATIONS OF MEDIEVAL MARRIAGE

A castle. LADY FENCIA pacing nervously. SIR GALLENFIELD enters.

SIR GALLENFIELD

Lady Fenecia, I presume?

(Bowing.)

I am Sir Gallenfield.

LADY FENCIA

(Curtseys.)

Charmed.

SIR GALLENFIELD

I'm glad you're not too thin. The plague has completely turned me off skinny wenches.

(SHE glares at HIM.)

Excuse me: "ladies."

LADY FENCIA

Your teeth are the perfect shade of yellow. I feel our parents made a good match.

SIR GALLENFIELD

There are some things I feel I must tell you before our nuptials. First, I eat meat. Vegetarianism is for cows. Secondly, I require my suit and chainmail be polished at least once a week, preferable on Sundays. Finally, let's not pretend I will be faithful to you alone. I will be with you only when I'm in the township, but anytime I travel outside our kingdom, I am free to see whomever I please. You, however, are required to stay chaste at all times to everyone save me. I trust that's acceptable?

LADY FENCIA

Perfectly.

(Beat.)

However, I too have certain items that need to be discussed. First, once a week, usually Fridays after my chores, I go out with the other maidens for some grog at the local inn. I will continue to do so, even after our nuptials. Secondly, if you are coming home late from a day on the battlefield, you must send me a note via a carrier pigeon to tell me so. If you do not, and you come home with the smell of brew on your breath, you will not be welcomed in our bedchamber. Finally, you must put the chamber pot under the bed every time you use it. You may not leave it out for me to step in or trip over. Agreed?

SIR GALLENFIELD

What if I send the pigeon and he gets lost? Or he cannot find you because you are out with your maidens? You can't possibly expect me to—

LADY FENCIA

In such a case, you are to arrive home as soon as possible, completely sober, with roses in hand.

SIR GALLENFIELD

(Reluctantly.)

Agreed.

(Pulls out a contract, which she pushes away.)

LADY FENCIA

I'm not yet through. Now, about your mother...

SIR GALLENFIELD

What about her?

LADY FENECIA

I don't want her checking in on us every minute. Tell her she may visit our dwelling twice a year: once in the spring, and once around the holy days. Under no circumstances is she to call upon us uninvited.

SIR GALLENFIELD

I will agree to that if you agree that no matter how heinously I behave, you are never to compare me to your last lord: most especially in the ways of love! You will not speak of my body parts with other ladies, nor are you to use words such as "jousting staff," "flagpole," "broadsword," or "Merlin's magical wand" at any time.

LADY FENECIA

Agreed.

SIR GALLENFIELD

Here is the contract. Sign there.

(Points.)

And there. Initial this. And once more. I look forward to a long and happy life together as—

(Writing on the contract.)

Sir and Lady Gallenfield.

LADY FENECIA

Gallenfield? But I am going to keep my maiden name. We will be—

(Crossing out the names and rewriting.)

Sir Gallenfield and Lady Fenecia.

SIR GALLENFIELD

Nonsense! You must take my name as your own. All the other knights will laugh at me!

LADY FENECIA

I don't want to change all my monogrammed handkerchiefs just because of some medieval tradition.

SIR GALLENFIELD

You must! I demand it!

LADY FENECIA

Whoa! Who are you to demand anything? You're fortunate I even agreed to this marriage. If my father hadn't—

SIR GALLENFIELD

Who are you to talk? Look at you. My swayback horse has more attractive curves.

LADY FENECIA

That does it!

(Tears up the contract.)

Find some other "wench" to polish your suit. Or maybe you can make the two-backed beast with your horse!

(Storms out.)

SIR GALLENFIELD

Wenches!

END OF PLAY