

Peermalion

A Comedy of SCA Manners

(© Carolyn J. Eaton, 1996 -- All Rights Reserved)

A Play inspired by Pygmalion (with Apologies to Bernard Shaw)

by Mistress Aldith Angharad St. George, OL

(With assistance by *Hirsch von Henford*, *Tatiana Nikolaevna Tumanova*, *Juan Santiago*,
Rose de LeMans, and the rest of the Golden Stag Players)

Dramatis Personae (*Original cast*)

Asinia -- A Laurel (*Rose de Le Mans*)

Placidia -- A Laurel (*Anne of Ockham*)

Galataeus of Asia Minor -- A Relative Newcomer (*Wulfric of Creigull*)

Sir Leigh eu Geste (former boyfriend of Asinia) (*Juan Santiago*)

Deteriorata of the Red Claw (*Margrethe Astrid Ravn*)

Egurgia -- Member of House Asinine (*Joanna Melissa Ronsivalle*)

Gratisa -- Member of House Asinine (*Original Nightshade*)

Frick -- Squire to Leigh (*Thorvald*)

Frack -- Squire to Leigh (*Tarik ibn Jamaladdin*)

Pretentio (A Pel/Laurel -- Clerk of the Order of the Laurel) (*Kæll of the Broken Tower*)

A Herald (*Charles "Bonefinder" Ravenstone*)

Lady Trivia (*Baroness Tangwystyl verch Morgant Glasvryn*)

Lady Tedia (*Condessa Juana Isabella de Montoya y Ramierz*)

Laurel 1 (*Michael of Worcester*)

Laurel 2 (*Vanessa*)

Laurel 3 (*Marisela Bianca de Esponosa y Piñolez*)

NOTE: Permission is likely to be granted to produce this play -- we only ask that you *ask* first! We will request that if you can video tape the show that we receive a copy of the tape as "royalty fees". You can contact Mistress Aldith at: aldith@goldenstag.net

ACT I

Scene -- A Newcomer's Revel, around February

(A table with a punchbowl at stage left. People (extras!) milling around, among them Galateus, Asinia, and various members of house Asinine --most (some?) have goblets. Enter Mistress Placidia from stage right, with Lady Egregia.)

Placidia I'm glad you talked me into coming to this event, although I think I hardly qualify as a newcomer.

Egregia Well, in a way, you *are* a newcomer -- to the Kingdom of the Jest.

Placidia Yeah, right, a newcomer with 10 years standing as a Laurel.

Egregia Yes, but you were standing in the Feast Kingdom.

(During this exchange, Galateus has been moving from group to group, listening to conversations but not really participating. At the end of Egregia's last line, Galateus trips, and spills the contents of his goblet down Placidia's gown.)

(Pregnant pause, shock from the crowd)

Placidia *(Caustically)* My, you Jesters sure know how to make newcomers feel welcome.

Egregia *(Sotto Voce)* Oh, for heaven's sake. *(Dabbing her off ...)*

Galateus *(Stumblingly -- trying to find the ... right ... words)* Oh, thy Excellency, I be so apologetic towards thy beauteous self.

Placidia *(Narrows eyes ... school marm-like -- not angry -- yet)* I'm a Mistress of the Order of the Laurel, that's not the proper form of address.

Galateus Uh, Your Acreage?

Placidia The "beauteous" part was fine, quit while you're ahead.

Egregia *(Leaning over and pointing)* This is a Laurel medallion. This is a Mistress of the Order of the Laurel.

Galateus Gee, I just thought she was a lady fighter, because she was wearing her shield around her neck. Wow, I hope I didn't mess up your dress.

(Pause)

Placidia No, no, it's really alright. It will probably come out with some lemon and salt.

Egregia *(Looking her in the eye)* Just about anything does.

(Asinia saunters over, and sniggers a bit, doesn't join the group just yet)

Galateus *(Eager)* Allow me to introduce myself, I hight Lord Vexorg, Destroyer of a Thousand Shields.

Placidia *(Condescending)* Oh, I'm so sorry. Have you been playing in the SCA for very long?

Asinia *(Butting in)* No, no, let me guess. *(Looking at him with arms crossed, calculating)* First year of College. State. *(Walk around him)* Let's see. Active about 8 months. Started last Summer. Been to Ducal Prize *(Points to t-tunic -- garage sale)*. Was brought in by room mate, who has since washed out of school. *(Ticking off points)* So, you're not really attached to anybody in particular. Hmmm. "Vexorg, Destroyer of a Thousand Shields". Started out with DnD, and then moved on to something harder. Like, say, "Magic" for example. You'd be a fighter, but your armor is all over the garage floor ... And you've probably read upward of a thousand fantasy novels, but you had to take English 101 over.

Galateus *(Shocked)* How the hell did you know all that?

Asinia Because, every universe has its laws, and you are one of them.

(Turns to Egregia)

But, Lady Egregia, you have not introduced me to your friend.

Egregia Oh, oh, Mistress Placidia, from the Feast Kingdom, this is Mistress Asinia.

Placidia THE Mistress Asinia?

Asinia THE Mistress Placidia?

(Squeals ... as it were)

Placidia Aren't you the author of Criticism in the SCA: The Art of Trashing Your Surroundings??

Asinia The same. And are YOU the author of Needles and Threads: The Art of Embroidery. While Living in SCA Cyberspace?

- Placidia At your service. I've wanted to meet you ever since I got out here.
- Asinia So, how did you get dragooned into coming to a newcomer's event?
- Egregia Oh, that was my idea. I thought it would be a fun way to introduce her to the Kingdom.
- Asinia Well, it was certainly a way to get a free bath! You should have brought your towel.
- Placidia You hardly count as a newcomer, what brings *you* here?
- Asinia Well, I could say that I had a date for the weekend, and that it fell through. And that would be partly true. But I like to come, from time to time, and check out the new "crop". I'm working on an article for the Kingdom newsletter, The Asinine Way: The Newbie Identification Guide.
- Galateus What is the name of your newsletter?
- Egregia The Plague.
- (Pause -- Asinia & Placidia drift to table, Egregia drifts toward Galateus)*
- Asinia That's a great houppelande you have on! The dagging is terrific! I presume, of course, that you did it.
- Placidia Well, no, actually, one of my apprentices did, as a Twelfth Night present.
- Asinia That's right, I remember hearing a rumor that you had a whole collection of apprentices back in the Feast.
- Placidia Well, only about 10 or 12 -- no big deal. How many have you got?
- Asinia At the moment, none.
- Galateus Um, excuse me? What are apprentices for?
- Egregia Oh, emptying chamber pots, washing dishes, you know, things like that.
- Asinia *(Laughs)* Not so much *that*, as oh, hemming, beading, that sort of thing.
- Placidia An apprentice is someone who makes a deal with a Laurel to learn the skills and arts that that Laurel knows, with the understanding that if they work really hard, they *may* eventually become a Laurel themselves.

- Galateus Like squires!
- (Asinia and Placidia look at each other)*
- Egregia Yes. Sort of like squires, or Pelican proteges.
- Asinia Look *(to Placidia)*, you and I need to talk. Let's go sneak off to some broom closet or something and talk about Laurel things.
- Placidia Yes, of shoes and shifts and fabric stores,
- Asinia Of brooches, girdles and rings.
- Placidia And who, of the Chivalry is hot.
- Together And whether pigs are kings! *(Laugh)*
- (Saunter off ... see following notes -- they don't quite get to the exit)*
- Egregia C'mon Vexorg. Let me introduce you to some people.
- (Turn towards buffet table. However, they end up watching the following encounter.)*
- (Enter Sir Leigh, dragged by Lady Deteriorata from same Entrance the two Laurels are about to exit ... Asinia and Sir Leigh look at each other, and:)*
- Deteriorata Oh, Mistress Asinia! How nice to see you! I love your dress, it's so ... slimming.
- Asinia *(Looks her right in the eye)* Why, thank you, Deteriorata! You know, it's really a shame, that when you bought that getup you're wearing at Renn Faire, you couldn't get it in your size!
- Deteriorata *(To Placidia)* Oh, you don't know me, but I'm Lady Deteriorata, and *(looking at Asinia)* this is **my** Lord, Sir Leigh.
- Asinia *(Looking Sir Leigh in the eye)* How nice for you, I'm sure. *(Backs off)* This is Mistress Placidia of the Kingdom of the Feast.
- Leigh *(Mumbles -- embarrassed)* Pleased to meet you I'm sure.
- Deteriorata *(To Placidia)* Sir Leigh and I haven't been together for very long. He's still a little overwhelmed.

- Placidia I'm sure he is. And if you'll excuse us ...
- (Placidia Drags Asinia off -- exit)*
- Galateus *(To Egregia)* Excuse me for asking, but what was that all about?
- Egregia Well, I don't know if I should tell you this, but ... can you keep a secret?
- Galateus Who would I tell?
- Egregia True. Asinia and Leigh used to be an item. They went together for about a year. He was an up and coming fighter. So, he started to get pretty high in the tournament lists, and right about that time, Deteriorata moved in.
- Galateus "Moved in?" What?
- Egregia Ok. Deteriorata is what we call "a Crown Chaser."
- Galateus Well, she sure is a babe.
- Egregia They always are -- and they all look like Malibu Barbie in Faire drag.
- Galateus You don't like her very much, do you?
- Egregia No, I don't. You see, Vexorg, Asinia and I have been friends for years. She and I started House Asinine, and it was a really good gig, until Deteriorata invited herself in. So we're still a household, but we're always on the edge of coming apart at the seams over this business. Unfortunately, Asinia's too proud to throw them out.
- Galateus If you don't mind my saying so, it looks to me like she's still stuck on him.
- Egregia You know, you're not as dumb as you look! I think so too. But Deteriorata is here to stay, at least until he makes her Queen once.
- Galateus This sounds incredibly complicated.
- Egregia Oh, no, that's the short version. There's a thousand tales in the naked kingdom, and this is just one of them.
- Galateus What about you -- are you Asinia's apprentice?
- Egregia Oh lord, no!

- Galateus How come?
- Egregia Maybe I just don't have a lot of ambition. I never wanted to be a peer all that badly. I play in the SCA because I'm happy here. Besides, when I want some help from Asinia, I always get some, and if I need something made, she sometimes does it or helps me do it.
- Galateus *(Thinks for a moment)* I think I'd LIKE to be a peer. Of course, I don't really know what a peer does ...
- Egregia That makes two of us.
- Galateus No, seriously! Don't peers get a lot of respect?
- Egregia I think it depends on the peer. But in general, yes, peers have a lot of prestige, *(pause)* and they're permanent.
- Galateus Permanent? How permanent?
- Egregia Here's a useful phrase to remember: "Kings and Queens - they come and go, but a peerage is forever!"
- Galateus I get it. Do you think if I asked *real nice* that Asinia would take me on as an apprentice?
- Egregia She *might*. Are you really ready to work that hard?
- Galateus Yeah, I think I am. And I want to become part of things. I've always been good at making things, but I want to be *really* good at making things.
- Egregia What things?
- Galateus *(smiles wryly)* Asinia was wrong about one thing -- I made this tunic, and I made my pouch, too.
- Egregia I'll tell you what -- I'll talk to Asinia, and see if I can't put in a good word for you.
- Galateus That'd be really nice.
- Egregia Then I'll do one better -- I'm inviting you to camp with us at March Crown!
- Galateus Really? Ok, you're on!
- (He starts to shake her hand, she shifts it to a more graceful ...)*

Egredia Let's go get some real food -- there's a Pizza Hut down the street.

Galateus Good deal!

(Exit)

(Asinia and Placidia return from ... wherever, laughing about something, chatting, whatever. Asinia carefully places herself so her back is to Deteriorata and Leigh.)

Placidia ... And then I said, "Suck ink, calligraphic scum!"

Asinia You scribes are *so* deep. *(Chuckles)*

Placidia Seriously, why don't you have any apprentices? Don't you want to pass on the sum total of your knowledge? Don't you want to support the arts in your kingdom?

Asinia Silly me, I thought my job was to *make* art.

Placidia Of course it is, but -- future generations still need to be taught!

Asinia Shoot, I can teach *anybody* art. I don't need to put a dog collar on them to do it!

Placidia I don't know if this is true of the Jest, but the Feast kingdom is a pretty tight **group**, and for people to get to the next level from being just "new" or "fringe" or whatever, it's nice for them to have an experienced hand to refer to and who can protect them. Besides, how else are they going to learn to become peers?

Asinia The same way I did -- by doing it!

Placidia Yes, and what a mess the new peers make before they finally figure it out! No, there are some of us who don't agree with you. However, I'm beginning to think that you don't want to take on an apprentice because you don't want the responsibility!

Asinia What do you *mean* I don't want responsibility? I'm so responsible I make myself sick! I run a household with Egredia, and I teach. Frankly, I think that apprenticeships intrude on what's left of my art time -- and I don't get enough art time!

Placidia Oh, no! I think you're chicken!

Asinia Chicken? **Chicken?** I'll show you chicken! I just betcha I could take that whatever-the-hell his name is, Vexacious, I just betcha I could get him Laureled by 12th Night!

Placidia Oh, come now. You're good, but you're not *that* good!

Asinia No, I could do it! I'd have to run him hard, and put him away wet, but I could do it!
(*Considering*) And what the hell, I haven't had a good challenge in awhile, I could use
one! I don't know how talented he is, but I've always wondered whether Laurels were
made, or born.

Placidia So, are you going to take him on? Do we have a bet?

Asinia Oh, yes indeedy -- not only do we have a bet, you're going to help me!

Placidia Yes - it would be quite a coup if we could bring this off!

Together Deal? Deal!

Asinia So let's not waste any more time -- let's talk details.

(*Exeunt*)

ACT II**Scene 1** -- March Crown, House Asinine's Encampment -- Morning

(The set should include bits showing that the house is encamped on the tourney field -- dome tents in background, eric rope in the foreground, chairs, table ... Saturday morning, household gathering -- after breakfast, before Invocation.)

Leigh is armoring up, stage right -- Frick and Frack assist ..., Deteriorata just watches armoring and doesn't help. Egregia, and Placidia are sitting in director's chairs, stage right, watching the armoring and chatting. Stage left there is a table -- Asinia and Gratuita are finishing up the dishes.)

Gratuita Ow! That water's HOT!

Asinia Oh, for goodness' sake, just wash the dishes! The water's supposed to be hot!

Gratuita But it makes my hands hurrtrrrt! I'm allergic to this kind of soooaaapp! *(whine!)*

Asinia Gratuita, soak the plate, or soak your head, I don't care which. Just get on with it.

(Enter herald)

Herald Oh yey! Oh yey!

Placidia Yeah, yeah ...

Herald Welcome to March Crown! These are your 9 O'Clock announcements! Court will begin at 10 O'Clock. The herald's meeting is in progress at heralds point. The marshals meeting is on the eric, now! The surgeons are meeting at surgeon's point, now. The lists officers are meeting by the Royal Pavilion, 5 minutes ago. The constables meeting started at 9. Armor inspection ends at 9:30. Queen's Guard standard announcement #1! The time is now 9:30.

(Herald exits)

All Thank you, Herald!

Leigh You heard 'im, guys! We're burning daylight!

(Frick and Frack work on Leigh's armor, schtick about getting it wrong -- putting vambrace on lower-leg, that kind of thing -- Leigh suffers through it all. Heads off stage followed by Frick and Frack. Rushes back on stage, cries out:)

CUP!

(Frenzied rushing around by Frick and Frack (they rush all the way across stage, run back on ...), Asinine calmly walks over to the armor bag, pulls out the cup and tosses it to him. He rushes back off stage, followed by Frick and Frack.)

Egregia *(To Gratuita)* Two scudis says that Court won't start before eleven!

Gratuita Oh, I don't know. You *always* win ...

Egregia Can I help it if we can set our watches by the Royalty?

(Galateus enters, stage right - to chair between Egregia and Placidia (sort of flops into it))

Galateus Wow, some line at the privy.

Asinia Ah, the consequences of the beer bust at the pirates' camp last night ... *(Pulls out a notebook from a bag by her chair, opens it, starts checking off items on a list -- says to Galateus:)* For today, you've got an arts competition third round, sciences sixth round. That'll give you time between now and invocation to get to the consulting table and submit your name and armory to the heralds.

Egregia *(Interrupting Asinia's train of thought)* Oh! Vexorg, are you changing your name?

(Galateus starts to answer, but Placidia cuts him off -- it would never occur to her to let him answer ...)

Placidia Since he's a Laurel's apprentice now, having a fantasy name won't do.

Egregia So, what did you pick?

(Galateus once again starts, but ...)

Asinia Placidia and I were very fond of Galateus. We thought that it was a rather charming play on his role as our apprentice.

Gratuita So what is that? Is it Roman?

(Galateus starts again ...)

Placidia Actually, its more Greek. His persona will be more or less Byzantine. Galateus is, of course, a reference to the myth of Pygmalia and Galetea, hence his full name will be: Galateus of Asia Minor.

Egregia *(Leans toward Galateus)* Is it me, or did you have very little to do with the selection of your new name? *(Grin)*

(Galateus starts ...)

Placidia Oh, don't be silly, Egregia! He *loves* this name! Don't you, Galateus?

(Pause, he looks bewildered, back and forth. Everyone is staring at him.)

Galateus Oh! Am I supposed to talk now?

Asinia Yes! You like your new name, Galateus, don't you?

Galateus Yeah! It takes a lot less space on my notebooks!

Asinia Good boy. *(Pat him on the shoulder)* Back to business. Between invocation and third round you've got time to sign up to teach at Spring Collegium, and then take your entry over to the arts and sciences pavilion.

Gratuita So, what is the arts competition?

Asinia Haven't you read your Plague?

Placidia Arts is Estonian Lost Wax Enameling.

Asinia Galateus, have you got your documentation?

Galateus *(Dumps a HUGE pile of paper -- 200+ pages -- on the table, puts a rock on it to hold it down)* Yup, here it is.

Gratuita Good grief! Is that documentation, or did you just re-write War and Peace?

Galateus Actually *(kind of sheepishly)*, it's doubling as my Art History term paper.

Egregia So, what did you make?

- Galateus (*Looks at Asinia (can I talk?), Asinia nods affirmative*) Um, I've made a half-scale replica of the casket reliquary of the pancreas of St. Sexburga.
- Egredia Where is it? I'd really like to see it!
- Galateus It's still in the trunk of my car. I have to borrow a cart to get it to the competition - it's kind of heavy.
- Asinia After lunch, I'll take you around to meet some of the other Laurels, and we'll make a stop by Merchant's Row where you can begin lessons on effective shopping technique. We should be done just before sixth round. You'll then take over your documentation and entry for the sciences competition.
- Egredia and Gratuita together:
Which is?
- Placidia "The Philosopher's Stone: Myth or Fantasy? Transmute Lead into Gold."
- Egredia So, what did you do?
- Galateus Well, I got out my old "Professor Wakko" Chemistry set, and messed with it some -- I didn't exactly turn lead into gold, but I think I discovered a new element. I also have a foot wide hole in my carpeting.
- Asinia You then need to return here to watch the final round. You can help us start preparing our presentation for court. After court and dinner, there's a Strawberry Party at the Royal Pavilion.
- Galateus (*A bit testy by this point*) Wait a minute! I was planning on taking Egredia to the Bardic Circle over at House Caterwaul!
- Asinia There will be plenty of time for Bardic Circles after you learn something about period vocal techniques and instrumentation.
- Egredia and Galateus together:
But!
- Asinia Galateus, we've got a very short time in which we must accomplish a great deal!
- Placidia (*To Asinia*) All play and no work, makes boy a boring jerk.
- (*Exeunt*)

Scene 2 -- After Arts Competition

Herald In two minutes, the final round of the Crown Tournament will begin!

(Crowd Gathers, and we do the Crown Lists Gavotte)

The Crown Lists Gavotte

Tune: *The Ascot Gavotte* from *My Fair Lady*

by Tatiana Nikolaevna Tumanova and Garth of Windhaven

All *(Chanted in rhythm)*
 Every Duke and Count and Peer is here,
 Everyone who should be here is here.
 What a smashing, positively bashing, spectacle -- the Crown Lists fights today.
 On the field are both the fighters waiting for the cue to hack and slay;
 What a gripping, absolutely ripping, moment at the Crown Lists fights today.

(Pause)

Herald *(Announce finals from offstage)* In this the first fight of the final round of the Crown Lists Tournament of the Kingdom of the Jest, here do meet Sir Leigh eu Geste and Viscount Sir Beau de Zeau. My Lords, salute you each the Crown. *(pause)* You may salute the person who's favor you bear *(pause)*, salute you each your worthy opponent *(pause)*, on your honor, and for the Crown of the Jest, *(see below)*

All *(Back to the Crown Lists Gavotte)*
 Heralds rushing, faces flushing;
 Heartbeats speed up -- I have never been so keyed up.
 Any second now, they'll begin the fun,
 Marshals' staffs are swinging, they are springing forward --

(Herald) (Lay on!)

Look! It has begun.

(Pause)

(Offstage -- lots of banging of swords and armor -- Galateus winces and reacts to the fighting, no one else does -- they're staring vacantly offstage. A big bash, and Galateus winces very obviously!)

Herald Victory to Viscount Sir Beau de Zeau!

All *(Back to the last bits of the Gavotte)*
 What a frenzied moment that was -- didn't they go charging into the fray?
 'Twas a thrilling, absolutely chilling moment at the Crown Lists fights today.

Herald In this the second fight of the final round of the Crown Lists Tournament of the Kingdom of the Jest, here do meet Sir Leigh Eugeste and Viscount Sir Beau de Zeau. My Lords, salute you each the Crown. *(pause)* You may salute the person who's favor you bear *(pause)*, salute you each your worthy opponent *(pause)*, on your honor, and for the Crown of the Jest, Lay On!

(More bashing off stage as fight starts (bashing stops during lines))

Gratuita *(To Egregia)* I can't see Deteriorata -- isn't she watching this?

Egregia Oh no, she's there in the Royal Pavilion -- sitting on the Queen's train.

Assinia *(To Placidia)* My, doesn't she look like that cat who's about to eat the canary?

Placidia Yes, a nice dish of l'Oiseau en rattan.

(Bash, bash, bash ... puffing and panting ... "HOLD!")

Galateus How can you guys be so calm? This is the second fight -- it's two out of three! Oh, my gosh!

Placidia We've seen our share of finals before.

Galateus Yes, but don't you want Sir Leigh to win?

Asinia *(Evil look)* Well, as peers, it's not in the best of taste to show a preference.

(Galateus is not listening, he's watching the fight ...)

Placidia *(Leans over and says)* Especially if you think of what a disaster it would be if our fighter actually won.

Asinia Shush, will ya'! I'm trying to set a good example.

(Bash, pause)

Galateus Kick his ASS, Leigh!

All *(Gasp of horror/shock!, Look at Galateus)*

(Pause)

(BASH! from offstage)

Herald Victory to Viscount Sir Beau de Zeau!

Exeunt

ACT III**Scene 1 -- June Crown -- House Asinine Encampment**

(The set should include bits showing that the house is encamped on the tourney field -- dome tents in background, eric rope in the foreground, chairs, table ... Saturday morning, household gathering -- after Invocation.)

Placidia and Asinia in director's chairs. Egregia is off to one side (stage left at the table) observing and playing chess (some board game) with Gratuita.)

Placidia *(To Asinia)* So, how is our project going?

Asinia Funny you should ask. I've been drilling Galateus on the history of the SCA, and I'm waiting for him so I can give him his pop-quiz for the morning.

(Galateus enters stage left)

Galateus I had to wait for the pirates to finish cleaning the privy before I could use it. How can they sing when they do that?

Egregia I imagine they need all the breath control they can get.

Asinia So, are you ready for your pop-quiz?

Galateus *(Looks tired)* I ... guess so.

Asinia Your topic is, the 13 Kingdoms. On your mark, go!

Galateus Chronological or alphabetical?

Asinia Alphabetical -- go!

Galateus *(Hands behind back, eyes shut, and "spews")*
 AIEEE *(Eye-EEE)*: One of the Jest-spawn Kingdoms, named after their battle cry.
 Blazin'hell: Also one of the Jest-spawned Kingdoms, evil climate, bikers in armor.
 Clamidies *(Clam-id-ee-ees)*: Spun off from the Feast kingdom, known for political lassitude, and embarassing tropical diseases.
 Dementia: Also spun off the Feast kingdom, populace went mad when they attempted to learn to camp at their events.
 The Feast: The first Jest-spawned kingdom. Devoted to excellent food and doing everything as little like the Jest as possible.

(Pretentio, wandering by, listens in on this ...)

Fraggin'wald (*vald*): The Kingdom was named when the founding Baron sponsored a field trip to the Black Forest -- the name comes from his comment "When are we going to get out of this Fraggin Wald?"

The Jest: The first, the best, the only, world without end, Amen.

(Everyone crosses themselves)

LoneStarorra: Spun off of Blazin'hell, fencing Arabs with rebel yells.

Miasma: Named for its fetid swamps and other tourney sites.

Riddle: Named at Pennsic 2, when they couldn't figure out what they were fighting for.

Snoutlands: Famous for their controversial lists and their fondness for pig-faced basinets.

Tepidbeer: Founded by a barony full of Irish brewers.

Un Til: They couldn't wait until they got their independence from the Jest, before they scheduled their first Crown tournament.

Placidia By St. George, I think he's got it!

(Placidia and Asinia shake hands)

Pretentio Mistress Asinia, aren't you going to give your performing boy a cookie?

(Galateus turns to make a remark, irritated, cut off by Egregia)

Egregia *(Hands Galateus her tankard)* Have something to drink -- you look like you need it.
(Shoots Pretentio a dirty look)

Asinia Master Pretentio, that's a splendid cod-piece you're wearing. I didn't know that they made them in shrink-to-fit!

Pretentio Oh, Mistress Asinia, your charm is exceeded only by your artistic talent.

Asinia Alright, buster, you didn't come here just to exchange pleasantries -- to what do we owe this honor?

Pretentio I've been hearing about your little "project", and I thought I'd check him out for myself.

Galateus *(Looks up)* I have a name.

Asinia Oh, pardon me. Master Pretentio, may I present to you my apprentice, Lord Galateus of Asia Minor.

Pretentio Charmed. *(Looks at Placidia)* And this is?

Asinia My friend and associate, Mistress Placidia, lately of the Feast Kingdom.

(Pretentio goes to kiss her hand)

Pretentio Enchante, ma Maitresse.

Gratuita *(To Egregia, stage whisper)* Did he just call Placidia a *mattress*?

(Egregia snickers)

Placidia I heard that! *(Looking back)* That's *Maitresse*, in French, that means "Mistress".

Pretentio Or bondage goddess, take your pick.

(Placidia's jaw drops in shock)

Actually, my reasons for visiting, not the least of which are to meet your talented young lad, what's his name, galoot?

Galateus *(Sullenly)* That's Galateus.

Pretentio *(To Asinia)* Was that I'd gotten a message that you wanted to see me between the second and third round. So, here I am.

Asinia Oh yes, that's right, I forgot. Step over here to my office.

(Pulls him to the side (down stage right))

Egregia That's all right, Asinia - we'll be gone in a minute *(finishes checker game in a blitzkrieg across the board -- stunning Gratuita and winning)*. *(To Galateus)* Don't you have a wooden spoon competition to get ready for?

Galateus Oh jeez! That's right! I almost forgot!

Egregia Tell you what, Gratuita and I will give you a hand with it. What's your entry?

Galateus It's a subtlety: I made a siege engine out of bread sticks.

(Egregia, Galateus and Gratuita exit stage left)

Placidia Well, since we're alone ...

- Asinia What I wanted to talk to you about, Pretentio, was that I'm planning to bring up Galateus in the Laurel Meeting tomorrow.
- Pretentio Oh, you are? What a surprise ...
- Asinia What's that supposed to mean?
- Pretentio Well, generally, Laurels don't tend to bring up their own apprentices.
- Asinia Yes, that's true. I really wouldn't like to do it myself, and it wouldn't even really be right if Placidia brought him up. So it had occurred to me ...
- Pretentio Yeeeeeeesssss?
- Asinia I'd like you to bring him up for me.
- Pretentio Well, I admit I've heard quite a lot about this kid. I can't actually say that I've seen a great deal of his work.
- Placidia You *are* judging Wooden Spoon and Sciences competitions today, aren't you?
- Pretentio Why, yes, it so happens that I am.
- Asinia You can see his work then, can't you?
- Pretentio This is all very neat, I must say. But just why, exactly, would I want to bring up *your* apprentice in Laurel council?
- Asinia For two reasons: one, if you do this for me, then I owe you a favor. Two, I brought *you* up in Laurel Council five years ago - this would be a nice way to thank me.
- (*Placidia is looking a little troubled*)
- Placidia Asinia, is this really necessary? Can't we wait until Galateus is noticed by one of the other Laurels?
- Asinia Of course, we can't. If he's to be Laureled by 12th night, we haven't a minute to lose.
- Pretentio Wait a minute - what do you mean, "Laureled by 12th night"?

Asinia Oh, Placidia and I have a gentlewoman's wager: that we can get Galateus Laureled by 12th night.

Pretentio It doesn't sound particularly gentle to *me*.

Placidia Asinia, I thought we were going to wait, and let Nature (and the Laurel Council) take its course.

Asinia I thought so, too, but no one's brought him up yet, and both of you know as well as I do that it could take a whole Geologic Era to get him from the Watch to the Discuss list! Besides, Pretentio, when you've gotten a chance to see his work for yourself, you'll know if Galateus is Laurel material or not.

Pretentio Look -- whatever agreement the two of you have between yourselves has nothing to do with me. I want no part of it. I will judge the arts competitions my way, and *if* your Galateus shows enough talent I will *think* about bringing him up in council tomorrow.

Asinia That's fine -- it's exactly what I wanted.

Pretentio And now, by your leave, I depart.

(Exit)

Asinia That's it -- we're in!

Placidia What do you *mean* we're in? He hasn't agreed to do anything he wasn't going to do in the first place.

Asinia Ah, but you're wrong! He wouldn't have even noticed Galateus, talented or not, if I hadn't made him think about it. He'll judge that competition, but in his mind the name "Galateus", and the word "Laurel" are now linked.

Placidia *(Throws up her hands)* I just hope that you're as smart as you think you are.

(Exeunt)

Scene 2 -- June Crown -- At Merchant's Row

(Tables with merchant stuff, signs, etc. A couple merchants behind the tables. Lady Tedia is at table stage left, looking at merchandise.)

(Herald enters)

Herald These are your fifth round announcements. The Wooden Spoon Competition has ended. All entrants please pick up your entries. The Sciences Competition for Period Armoring Tools will be at sixth round in the Arts and Sciences pavilion.

All *(offstage)* Thank you, Herald!

(Herald exits)

(Pretentio and Galateus enter)

Galateus I really appreciate your helping me take my sciences entry to the A&S Pavilion.

Pretentio I don't think an anvil is the sort of armoring tool that they were expecting.

Galateus I bet I'm the first person to cast their own anvil!

Pretentio If I hadn't been there, you would have been the surgeon's first on-site hernia case!

Galateus Yeah, well ... Asinia keeps telling me that ambition in the arts is it's own reward.

Pretentio *(Sniffs)* I'm sure she does. And now, I must take my leave of you, since I have to judge the Sciences competition. I promise not to grade you down for my pulled muscles.

Galateus I'm going to hang around here. I have a date to meet Egregia for a shopping trip.

(Pretentio exits)

(Galateus looks at one of the tables -- stage right)

(Enter Lady Trivia -- spots Tedia, and strikes up a conversation)

Trivia Oh, Tedia! You'll never guess what I just found out!

Tedia Hi, Trivia, what's up?

Trivia I just found out who the Wooden Spoon winner is!

(Galateus' ears perk up (as it were), and he's obviously starting to pay attention to what's being said))

Tedia So give! Who is it?

Trivia Take a wild guess.

Tedia Oh, no. Not again. Not "the boy wonder"!?

Trivia You got it!

Tedia I swear I don't know why we keep entering these competitions.

Trivia Me, neither. My sugar cube castle didn't stand a chance against a bread stick siege engine.

Tedia The judges should've given him an "E" for "Excess".

Trivia I guess I shouldn't be surprised-- after all, he *is* apprenticed to that witch, Asinia!

Tedia Is he really? I guess I should've known.

Trivia Between that, and his obvious run for the Laurel, we'll probably see him done by 12th Night.

Tedia You have to admit, he is pretty good.

Trivia Hell, *I'm* pretty good, but **he's** got half the Laurel council pushing him! Mere mortals like you and me don't stand a chance!

Tedia Oh well. *(Shrugs)* I've got an idea -- why don't we go back to my camp, and drown our sorrows in some Dragonsfire Ale.

Trivia Sounds good to me.

(Tedia and Trivia exit)

(Enter Gratuita)

Gratuita Hi Galateus! I just saw Egregia! She's on her way!

Galateus Gratuita, will you tell Egregia I'll meet her back in camp, and that I'm sorry? I just gotta be alone for awhile ...

(Exits, doesn't wait for her to answer)

Gratuita Um, okay...

(Exit)

Scene 3 -- June Crown -- Back at Camp -- Just before Finals

(Leigh in armor, between rounds -- helmet off, drinking water (or whatever), sitting in a director's chair. Squires hovering.)

(Enter Asinia and Placidia with shopping bags)

Asinia Hi Leigh! Hi guys! How're things? Our boy won the Sciences competition hands down! No one's ever made their own anvil for one of these before!

Placidia Oh, is there anything to drink? I'm *parched!* Frick, is there any iced tea left?

Frick Uh, no ... but we still got about a half-gallon of gatorade.

(Asinia notices that Leigh is dripping sweat -- in a fluid motion grabs a wet cloth, dips it in the cooler, and brings it out and puts it on his forehead ...)

Placidia No ... I'll have water -- that's fine.

Asinia We can go on a store run later. *(To Leigh)* You look beat -- how are you doing?

Leigh Oh, pretty good. I'm in the finals...

Asinia Really! Oh, good for you!

Leigh You haven't seen Deteriorata, have you?

Asinia *(Crestfallen)* Uh ... no, not recently.

Frack She was going to watch the finals in the royal pavilion. I think she's changed her mind and is on her way here.

Placidia *(Sotto voce - to Asinia)* Here?

Asinia Well, maybe I'd better make that store run now. Where are my keys?

Leigh I'd really like it if you stayed around for my fight.

Asinia Okay. I guess it can wait.

(Asinia takes a seat)

(Deteriorata blows in)

Deteriorata Hi, guys! Of course, the Queen invited me to watch the finals from the Royal Pavilion, but no way I'm gonna be humiliated again in front of all those people.

Leigh *(Jokingly)* Don't sound so confident!

Deteriorata *(Cloyingly)* Oh, you know I didn't mean it, sugar. *(Gives him a little kiss, then turns her back on him.)* Is there anything to drink besides gatorade? I finished off the iced tea a while ago, and I didn't see anything else in the cooler...

Placidia Asinia was going to go on a store run after the finals.

Deteriorata Well, couldn't you go now?

Leigh I asked her to stay for my fight.

Deteriorata Oh, you did? I guess I'll have to drink water, then ...

(Egregia and Gratuita enter)

Egregia and Gratuita

Leigh! Is it true? Are you in the finals?

Leigh Yeah, 'fraid so!

Gratuita We're sure you'll make a wonderful King.

Egregia And if it goes the other way, we'll get you so drunk, you won't care if you lost!

Leigh Gee, thanks ...

Herald *(From offstage)* Will Sir Leigh eu Geste and Duke Sir Reel Istique, please arm and stand ready for the final rounds!

Leigh That's me.

(Leigh grabs helm, squires grab sword/shield and follow, he exits)

(Everyone settles into their chairs to watch the fight, Deteriorata futzes with her hair, with a hand mirror)

- Asinia *(Leaning over to Egregia)* Have you seen Galateus? He should be here!
- Egregia *(A little put out)* I haven't seen him, but Gratuita has.
- Gratuita I saw him at the Merchant's Row -- he said he needed to go for a walk. He looked messed up about something.
- Placidia I can't think what. He won the Wooden Spoon and Sciences competitions.
- Asinia Huh. Maybe I should go look for him.
- Gratuita I wouldn't. He really looked like he wanted to be alone.
- Egregia It doesn't matter now. He'll be back when he's back. Might as well leave him alone.
- Herald *(Offstage)* Victory in the first fight of the Crown Lists to Sir Leigh eu Geste!
(Announcement gets everyone's attention for a sec ...)
- Gratuita Oh good for Leigh! He's in wonderful form, isn't he?
- Asinia He sure is - I don't know what I was worrying about. He doesn't look tired at all, now.
- Deteriorata *(Smug)* Me, I'd say he looks *inspired*.
- Asinia Yes, I suppose you would.
(Deteriorata is about to reply, but is cut off by the Herald)
- Herald *(Offstage)* Victory in the second fight of the Crown Lists to Duke Sir Reel Istique!
- Deteriorata Oh, DAMN him!
- Egregia Damn who?
- Placidia Does it matter?
- Frick *(To Frack)* Heads up, dude -- Leigh's got a busted vambrace. We better get the spare.
- Frack Where *is* the spare?

Asinia *(Grabs it out of Leigh's armor bag)* Here it is -- catch!

(Frick and Frack fumble, drop, pick up & take off)

Frick & Frack Thanks, man!

Asinia You're welcome, girls.

Deteriorata I hate this part. Why *do* they have to wait so long before the last fight?

Egregia So the fighters can catch their breath?

Gratuita, Asinia, Placidia
Noooo!

Gratuita So the herald can hunt for the ceremony book?

Egregia, Asinia, Placidia
Noooo!

Placidia So the Chivalry has time to assemble on the field?

Gratuita, Asinia, Egregia
Noooo!

Asinia To draw out the suspense to a near-fever pitch, thereby making the two consorts bite their lips bloody in anticipation?

Placidia, Egregia, Gratuita and Asinia
YES!!!

Deteriorata That's IT. *(Jumps out of her chair)* What do you all take me for? Do you think I don't know when you're making fun of me? Do you think I don't get your little cracks at my expense?

Placidia For cryin' out loud, Deteriorata! We didn't mean *you* specifically.

Deteriorata Oh, right! Like I can't count, and I don't know that I'm one of the two possible consorts.

Asinia Really! It wasn't personal!

Deteriorata Bullshit! It isn't just *this*, Asinia. All I've gotten from you, ever since I started seeing Leigh, has been one nasty crack after another. I told Leigh that I wanted to camp alone. You told him you could handle it. Well, you sure are "handling it". Well, "handle" this! If he wins, you're gonna make me the dress of the century.

Asinia *(Genuinely interested)* Why, exactly, would I do that?

Deteriorata Because Leigh's going to ask you to make our stepping up garb. And you won't turn him down, because if you do, you'll have to give him a reason. And I don't think you have the nerve!

Egregia *(Pissed off)* Alright. That's enough! Deteriorata, he hasn't won *yet*, so I'd back off if I were you.

Herald *(Offstage)* Victory to Sir Leigh eu Geste, for the honor of Lady Deteriorata of the Red Claw!

(Asinia and Egregia look at each other, major pause. Deteriorata is staring out at the field -- Asinia completely forgotten, Asinia's beaten and she knows it. Asinia drops a curtsey, and yanks the skirts of both Placidia and Egregia who follow her lead. Gratuita follows suit ... Deteriorata hasn't even noticed, she adjusts her bodice and exits out to the field, quickly. The other four rise.)

Placidia Weeeelll ... Looks like we better make that store run, there's gonna be a party here tonight.

Asinia Gee, I hope they've got a special on hemlock.

(Placidia and Asinia exit)

Gratuita Wait, I'm coming with you. Egregia?

Egregia No, I think I'll stay and hold down the fort.

(Gratuita exits after P and A)

(Enter Galateus)

Egregia and Galateus

Oh, hi!

(Start. Laugh ... try again)

Galateus Where'd everybody go?

Egregia Do you want the long version or the short?

Galateus Uh, short.

Egregia Leigh won the finals. Asinia, Placidia and Gratuita went to the store. Deteriorata's out on the field with Leigh. That leaves me.

Galateus I guess I missed everything.

Egregia You sure did! Where have you been, anyway?

Galateus I walked around the parking lot about twelve times.

Egregia Ok ... and why were you doing that? Why did you stand me up?

Galateus If I tell you, will you not tell Asinia or anybody else?

Egregia Of course I won't, if you don't want me to. Do you mind if I sit?

Galateus Naw, go ahead. This may take awhile.

(She sits in the first chair available)

Egregia, I don't know what to do, and maybe once I tell you what's going on, you can give me a clue ...

For months and months, I've been working so hard I don't know which end is up. I may be getting four hours of sleep a night. I go to school, I go to Asinia's, I go to the library, I go to school, I go to Asinia's, I go to the library. Then, about every four weeks I go to an event. I enter arts contests, and I usually win them.

Now, I'm hearing people talk about how I'm supposed to be this "golden boy" or something. And Master Pretentio, who wouldn't even look at me twice, or have a decent word to say to me, is acting like my best pal! What's going on???

Egregia What's going on, is that you're just about in the home stretch for the laurel!

Galateus That's just it! What is this, a horse race? I feel like a performing dog! Asinia says "jump", and I say "How high!" Egregia, I don't even know why I'm doing this anymore!

- Egregia I thought it was because you wanted to be a peer.
- Galateus Yeah, maybe. But not like this! It's been occurring to me that most people don't get the laurel this soon.
- Egregia Good guess!
- Galateus Yeah, but ... they resent it, and they resent *me*!
- Egregia Oh, come on. How much of that is sour grapes?
- Galateus Some, I guess. But I'm hearing a *lot* of it. It isn't the gossip that's gettin' to me. Through all of the SCA lore I've been force-feeding myself, some of this is starting to sink in, and everything I've heard or read says that what I'm doing isn't the right way to get a peerage! What do *you* think?
- Egregia Do you really want my opinion?
- Galateus YES!
- Egregia It isn't *my* way. But then, I've said before, I'm not all that ambitious. I will say that since Asinia's taken you on as her apprentice, she's been more excited about *being* a Laurel than she's been in a long time. It's been a welcome distraction from her difficulties with Deteriorata.
- Galateus Oh, good. Now I'm Laurel therapy. Doesn't anybody care about what *I* want?
- Egregia Galateus -- what do you want from me? Asinia's my best friend. Anything that helps her in this is a good deal. Besides, you've *never* told anyone what you want - especially not me!
- Galateus Oh, jeez! I guess I haven't! Y'know, Egregia, I *don't* know what I want! I just don't feel like I can stop now.
- Egregia Galateus, you just have to do what you have to do.
- Galateus (*Sits down, puts face in his hands*) How much longer is this going to go on?
- Egregia (*Looking at the sky*) Well, at least until 12th Night.
- Galateus (*Looks up at her*) You know, I really appreciate you listening to me sound off about all of this.

Egregia You're welcome! Any time.

Galateus And I really am sorry, about not making it to merchant's row today. What do you say we go off and find a disreputable bardic circle somewhere this evening?

Egregia I would love to.

Galateus Guess we should wait until after dinner and all that. Then we can go.

Egregia *(Stands up, takes him by the hand)* Why wait? How serious about disreputable were you?

Galateus Pretty serious, actually.

(Exeunt, hand in hand)

ACT IV

Scene 1 -- Twelfth Night -- Before Court -- The Laurel Meeting

(We pick up at the end of the Laurel meeting, last bits on candidate discussions. Deteriorata is bored, not paying attention to what's happening in the meeting.)

- Leigh: Ok, we'll wait on this candidate for our Successors. Who's next?
- Pretentio: Lord Galateus of Asia Minor. Put on the short-term list at October Crown. He's currently front runner for the Order of the Golden Pansy.
- Leigh: Discussion?
- Pretentio: Since Mistress Asinia is his Laurel, perhaps we should start with her.
- Asinia: *(Stands up, smug ...)* I'm very happy with how he's come along: he's doing a huge amount of research, and he hasn't lost a single Arts competition since Beltane.
- Laurel 1: As far as I can see, all Galateus has proved is that he can win competitions. What else has he done?
- Asinia: *(Snaps)* He taught four classes at Arts and Sciences -- *(a bit of venom)* or were you even there?
- Laurel 2: I audited his medieval plumbing class. I found it really illuminating.
- (Asinia sits)*
- Laurel 1: There's fine arts for you -- engineering cess-pits! Please!
- Placidia: I could've sworn that the Laurel covered Sciences as well as Arts?
- Pretentio: Can we say then, that Galateus is an all-round Laurel?
- Leigh: That sounds good to me. *(Looks at Deteriorata)* What say you, my lady?
- Deteriorata: *(She's been filing her nails)* What? Oh sure, whatever. Fine.
- Leigh: Ok. Moving right along. Can we see a show of hands on Lord Galateus?
- (Laurel 1, Laurel 2, Laurel 3 thumbs down; Pretentio, Asinia, Placidia thumbs up.)*

Leigh: Since there is a tied vote, and the Crown reserves the right to make the final decision, I say let's do him. We will Laurel him today. Who will approach him?

(Asinia and Placidia's hands go up so fast you can barely see it.)

Leigh: Very well. Send him to Us when you're done. Is there any other business before this council?

Pretentio: No, Your Majesty.

Leigh: Thank you for your time, you have Our leave to depart.

(Meeting breaks up. Laurels exit stage right, taking their chairs... Deteriorata starts to leave stage left. Leigh is moving thrones.)

Leigh: Wait a minute. Don't you want to be here when I talk to Galateus?

Deteriorata: No, not really. *(snotty)* I need to get ready for court. *(Testy)* Do you have a problem with that?

Leigh: *(Starts to say more, then ... annoyed)* No. Do what you want.

Deteriorata: Fine! *(Begins to leave, then turns)* No -- NOT fine. You know, this hasn't been any more fun for me than it is for you. I haven't had any fun since we stepped up. I've worked my tail off with paperwork, making nice to every boring suckbutt in every local group in the Kingdom. Then I get to listen to one endless report after another from the officers -- and for my trouble, all I get from your precious *peerage* is disrespect, and sniggering behind my back. It's all right for you. *You* get to walk around "I'm mister King, Lord of all I survey!" Leaving me to clean up all the mess. Dammit! I'm sick to death of the whole thing.

Leigh: *(Angry -- build to 'not-quite-shouting')* Wait just a minute. You GOT what you wanted. You *wanted* to be Queen, and I *made* you Queen. Plus which, you don't seem to mind sitting the Throne and being the center of attention -- you LOVE it! You're just pissed off because it isn't all PRESENTS, and there's a job to do. I don't think it's too much to ask for you to *do* the job!

Deteriorata: Well, you can take the job and you can shove it!

Leigh: *(Calm again -- it's over, he knows it)* In a couple of hours you won't be Queen anymore, and those nasty peers and populace won't have you to kick around.

Deteriorata: That's right, and to hell with 'em. (*Turns, looks him in the eye*) For that matter, to hell with you, too! (*She turns and leaves -- flounces out stage Left*)

Leigh: (*Calls after her*) Can't be any worse hell than the last four months, sweetheart!

(*Galateus enters from stage Right*)

Galateus: Um, Your Majesty, can I talk to You for a moment?

(*Exeunt*)

Scene 2 -- The Final Court of Leigh and Deteriorata

(Court has gathered, King/Queen have 'teleported' (WK traditional term -- Royalty in place, not processing)...)

Herald: All pay heed to the Court of Leigh and Deteriorata, King and Queen of the Jest!

(Pause, consult with Their Majesties ...)

Their Majesties give you permission to be seated.

(Same -- consult first ...)

Your Majesty -- A gift of cheesy comestibles from Saltire Shire.

Leigh: By all means, let them come forward.

(Extras gather as the Saltire Shire, and present a basket of goodies)

Leigh: Very nice, thank you *(the usual pleasantries)*. *(Looks up at Herald and nods)*

Herald: You have Their Majesties leave to depart.

(Saltire Shire exits and finds seats)

Herald: The strength and stability of the Kingdom lie in these virtues of its people: pointless labor, sweaty exercise, and useless decoration. And without the pretty stuff, we would all look rather plain.

Let the Members of the Order of the Laurel attend upon Their Majesties.

(The Laurels come forward and kneel, including Pretentio, Asinia and Placidia)

Leigh: What business have you before us?

Asinia: Your Majesty, we, the Companions of the Order of the Laurel of the Jest feel that our numbers are not complete, and that there is one here present whose honor and achievement in the arts and sciences entitles him to recognition as our peer.

Leigh: We are agreed. Call the candidate forward.

Herald: Let Lord Galateus of Asia Minor come before Their Majesties.

Leigh: Galateus, mindful of the honor you have brought to this Our Realm by your accomplishments, and mindful also of the wishes of your Peers, it is Our intent to admit you to the Order of the Laurel. Will you accept from Us this honor?

Galateus: No, Your Majesty, I cannot.

(Shock from all members of the court, except for the King. Asinia and Placidia are stunned -- "is he nuts?")

However, Your Majesty, I would like to address the members of the Order of the Laurel, and the populace.

Leigh: Very well, proceed.

Galateus: *(Haltingly, turns and faces the audience)* Meaning no disrespect to the Companions of the Order of the Laurel, to the assembled populace, or to Your Majesties, I cannot in good conscience accept this honor. *(Turns back to the Crowns)* And I humbly ask Your leave to depart.

Leigh: Well, then, Lord Galateus, you have Our leave to depart Our Court.

(He walks out of court.)

(Placidia and Asinia are stunned)

Asinia: Your Majesty, I humbly beg Your leave to depart!

Leigh: By all means ...

(She leaves, following Galateus)

Leigh: Does the Order of the Laurel have any further business before this court?

Placidia: Um, no, Your Majesty.

Leigh: Then you have Our leave to depart.

Herald: This ends this court of King Leigh and Queen Deteriorata, Coronation will begin in one hour. You have Their Majesties leave to depart and go about Your Business. Long Live the King! *(Pause for members of court to repeat)* Long Live the Queen! *(Pause for members of court to repeat)* Hip hip ...
(Exeunt)

Scene 3 -- After Court -- In a Hall

(Egregia and Gratuita, stage left, household table at 12th Night)

Gratuita: *(To Egregia)* I've never seen this! I've been playing for six years, I've never seen this!

Egregia: Y'know, I wasn't surprised...

Gratuita: Why not? Everyone else was!

Egregia: Yes, I know. But, I think I understand why he did it. Unfortunately, he's probably thrown away the Laurel for good.

(Galateus enters, stage right, seriously shaken)

Egregia: Galateus, are you all right?

Galateus: I could really use a drink. Is there any wine left?

(Gratuita hands him a goblet)

Gratuita: Here you go, Australia's finest.

Galateus: *(Downs it in one shot)* Give me another one.

Gratuita: I don't know...

Egregia: Gratuita, can I talk to Galateus for a moment?

Gratuita: Fine, I er ... have to ... um ... floss the cat ...

(Exit stage left)

Egregia: Maybe you'd better tell me what's going on, *before* you get hammered.

Galateus: *(Shakes head)* She's never going to understand. I had to do it.

Egregia: I know you haven't been feeling comfortable about this since June Crown...

Galateus: *(Shakes head)* No, no I haven't. At first, it was fun. But, somewhere along the line, I realized that everybody was doing it for the wrong reasons, and I can't stand it. Now, can I have another drink?

(She pours him one)

Egria: Well, that's the bottle.

(He downs it. Getting a bit 'lit' -- not seriously drunk, but he's feeling relaxed enough to be able to stand up to Asinia and not back down.)

Egria: You don't have to explain yourself to me. If you felt it was wrong, that's good enough for me. *(He looks at her gratefully)* But, you're going to have to explain it to Asinia.

Galateus: Oh, god, if I'm lucky she'll never want to talk to me again.

Egria: No such luck. She's coming now in full sail.

Galateus: *(Sigh)* If it were done, t'were best done quickly.

(Asinia storms up to Galateus)

Egria: *(Grabs his hand)* I better go.

Galateus: Where will you be?

(Asinia has arrived and is just waiting for Egria to leave, glaring ...)

Egria: I'll be around. Come find me after.

(Asinia gives up waiting ...)

Asinia: Just what in *hell* was that?

Galateus: *(A little defensive)* I don't know, I think that was me refusing the Laurel. Egria, what did you think it was?

Egria: I think it's time for me to leave.

(Egria exits, Placidia catches up to Asinia)

Asinia: Yes, I saw that. Everyone saw that. What I want to know is, why? And don't give me a bunch of lip about conscience. It took a lot of conscience to let me and Placidia knock ourselves out to get this goodie for you, and then you turn on us without a word of warning! You *ingrate!*

Galateus: *(Starts quiet, and winds up over the next couple of speeches ...)* All right. Yes, you've taught me a lot, *(looks at Placidia -- back and forth)* both of you have. And you've opened me up to learn things that I never would have learned. And if it had just been that, I could be grateful without a qualm. And we could shake hands, and everyone's happy. But there's a lot more to it than that.

Asinia: I bet I can guess what that is. *(Similar condescending bit as in Act I, when she gives his background as Vexorg)* We've worked you pretty hard, haven't we? Numberless hours of toil and misery. You poor, put-upon chap, you. You must have resented me pretty deeply. I mean, after all, no man likes to be talked down to by a woman. I confess, I have been treating you like an inferior, because you have been up until now. No, you couldn't stand to let the two old ladies have their moment in the sun, too, could you? Oh, I've got your number boy, you did this from spite!

Galateus: *(Pauses, looks at the floor, finds the strength and ...)* Guess what, Mistress Asinia? You're dead wrong. You really are amazing. You couldn't believe that I'd turn this down for reasons of conscience.

Asinia: WHAT reasons of conscience? What moral problem could you possibly have with being a Laurel?

Galateus: You ought to know better than anyone. This isn't about me. This isn't about whether I have got what it takes to be a peer in this Kingdom, not to mention being a *good* peer. This is about *your* ego, *(pointing to Placidia)* and *her* ego, and bets made between Laurels in back corners.

You just don't get it, do you? I started in the SCA, not just because I'm fascinated with the Middle Ages, but because I love the idea of a group of people living with honor and chivalry toward each other. That means something to me.

You were right, I did read a thousand fantasy novels, but I read Mallory, too. I wanted to be better than I am. I wanted to live with honor -- I wanted self-respect.

(Pause - quiet again)

And now, I don't respect myself at all. I worked my ass off, but between being a tool for the two of you, and being resented by everyone else, NO, I *don't* want to be a Laurel. Not if it means that I've got to become like the rest of you -- a bunch of back-biting, egotistical, costumed goofs!

Placidia: *(Quietly)* All this time, why didn't you tell us?

- Galateus: *(To her)* You were always nice to me, Placidia, and I appreciate it. Underneath that arrogant, snide exterior, you're a good person.
- Placidia: Well, thank you dear. But you still haven't answered the question.
- Galateus: *(Points to Asinia)* Because of Queen Shit there! *(Looks at her, crosses his arms)* She who must be obeyed! *(Lean forward, possibly leaning on the table)* Does it ever occur to you, Asinia, that the world isn't just the Jest Kingdom, that it's not just the Order of the Laurel? It's certainly bigger than the SCA.
- Asinia: *(More subdued -- quietly)* Ok. Let us, for the sake of argument, assume that you have a point. *(Still not wanting to get it, starts to raise voice again)* Do you realize that I've been discredited to the point that I may never be able to get the Laurel for you?
- Galateus: *(Rolls eyes)* Asinia -- I don't want you to get the Laurel for me. That's what I've been trying to tell you . I don't want you, Placidia, Leigh, anyone to *get* me the Laurel. *If* I want the Laurel, I want to get it on my own, at my speed. I may never get it -- it doesn't matter!
- Asinia: *(Long pause. Hurt but not wanting to show it)* That's it then. As near as I can tell, your apprenticeship is pretty much over with. Do you still want to be a member of the household?
- Placidia: *(Peacemaker, jumping in ...)* Why don't we just drop this for now. I think you've both made yourselves very clear. *(To Galateus)* We were wrong to make a bet using another human being as the prize. And I apologize to you for that. Nevertheless, you *are* talented. We couldn't have gotten as far with you as we did if you didn't honestly have talent, ability and tenacity. Those are all good qualities: if you have those, you're respected wherever you go, peerage or not.
(Asinia looks at her ... (cold))
(Looks at Asinia) It's true. He's right! He's got us here, why can't you admit it?
- Galateus: For the same reason she can't tell Deteriorata where to stick it.
- Asinia: Hey! You're out of line!
- Galateus: No, this is the first time I've actually been IN line! You've been eating it from Deteriorata all this year, then you regurgitate it and feed it to ME! Why didn't you just tell HER to shove it?
- Asinia: *(Looks at both of them -- almost teary eyed)* If you know that much, then you know why. Me, I've had enough -- I need to go for a walk.
(Asinia exits stage right, making a grab for her hanky)
(Exeunt)

Scene 4 -- Outside, After Coronation

(Ubiquitous bench stage center, Asinia sitting on stage right side of bench, goblet on bench next to her, takes a pull off of something hard liquor-like (you can tell by the wince as she sips on it), hanky in hand, not crying. Enter stage left, Earl Leigh)

Leigh: Scudi for your thoughts.

Asinia: *(Pulls back sleeve to look at watch)* My goodness, isn't it time for coronation court?

Leigh: Coronation court's over. How long have you been out here?

Asinia: Gee, I don't know. About an hour and a half, I guess. So, where's Deteriorata, or should I say, *Her Excellency Deteriorata*?

Leigh: Oh, I expect she's off preening someplace. Checking out her new coronet.

Asinia: *(Uncertain)* You don't sound as if you care all that much.

Leigh: Let's just say I'm glad I didn't spend that much on the Coronet. No, that's over.

Asinia: *(Hopeful)* It is?

Leigh: Soon as we stepped down, she dumped me like a hot potato. Actually, I'm kinda relieved.

Asinia: Is that why you're here now?

Leigh: Partly. And partly because I owe you an explanation.

Asinia: Only one?

Leigh: Ok. I'll just start at the beginning. Galateus came to see me before our last court.

Asinia: You *knew* about this?

Leigh: Yes, I did. I was the King. I'm supposed to know. *He* came to see *me*.

Asinia: So, what did he say?

Leigh: It was short and sweet. He told me he didn't mean to accept the honor, and asked me if he ought refuse it in court. I told him that it was his decision, and that I would support whatever he wanted to do.

- Asinia: Didn't you try to talk him out of it?
- Leigh: No, I didn't, because he had to have been serious to have screwed up his courage to ask me about it in the first place. I figured he knew what he was doing. Frankly, I think that I agreed with him.
- Asinia: Wait a minute! When the council was split on whether or not to do him, you broke it in favor of Galateus. If you didn't think he ought to be a Laurel or that there was a problem, why didn't you stop it then?
- Leigh: To be honest, I wasn't thinking about what he wanted either, at the time. I was thinking about what **you** wanted. (*Sit down, near her on bench, but not intimate*)
- Asinia: (*Half-happy, half-horrified*) Leigh, that was a mistake.
- Leigh: Yeah, it was. But you and I have both made mistakes this year. I guess most of my sins have been those of omission.
- Asinia: What do you mean?
- Leigh: It's not complicated. I've been spending a lot of time being whapped, and not spending much time being a really good Knight, or King, for that matter.
- Asinia: We spent the better part of this year wasting time, haven't we? I've sure wasted mine. I was hurt, so I tried to use Galateus to rebuild my ego.
- Leigh: I was wondering about that. But you haven't wasted your time with him. Don't you understand? That kid's a Laurel. Maybe not now, but he will be.
- Asinia: He is good, isn't he?
- Leigh: Yes, he is. Most of that's him, but some of that's you.
- Asinia: Yes, I've done such a great job, he'll probably never speak to me again.
- Leigh: I wouldn't worry about it. In this group, two years and nobody will be around who remembers.
- Asinia: Do you know what he said to me? He said that we were just a bunch of costumed goofs.
- Leigh: (*Laughs*) Well, we are, aren't we?

Asinia: *(Rueful)* Maybe so. You know, ever since I was Laureled, I've been going around this Kingdom like I knew it all. And up 'til now, nobody's ever said "boo" to me, much less challenged me, until Galateus did just now. And Leigh, he was right.

Leigh: The way I see it, I've spent the last year with my head up my ass, but now I know who I am - a lot has changed, and now I know what my real life is, and I know that this game is the way that I've found to be something better than I am.

Asinia: That's just what Galateus said.

Leigh: Then he's got it, hasn't he?

Asinia: Yeah, I guess he does. *(Stands, and turns away from Leigh)* I just couldn't face the fact that in real life I'm just a legal secretary, who lives in a mediocre apartment, who has a mediocre car, and a mediocre life. But I come here, and I'm a peer and a scholar. *(Turns back to him)* I **am** Queen Shit.

Leigh: Yes, you are, which makes me *King* Shit, I suppose. Except that, tomorrow's Monday, and it's back to the body-shop.

Asinia: And back to the lawyer's office.

Leigh: But until then *(kneels to her, takes her hand)*, you are my lady.

(Nice little tableau here -- he is kneeling, and holding her hand, she's standing and smiling down at him ...)

Asinia: *(Melting)* And you, my lord, are my parfit gentle knight.

(Pause -- Tableau)

(Exeunt)

~ finis ~

Production Notes (based on January 6, 1996 performance at West Kingdom 12th Night):

These are some notes on how we did it -- maybe this will help you, if you decide to do it ...

Galateus' character, during the course of the play, has major costume changes. In the first act, we see him in basic t-tunic and jeans, fantasy dagger (pack of "Magic" cards in belt pouch), that kind of thing. In the second, we see something nicer. In the third, even better, and by the fourth act, his costume is a stunning piece of very well researched garb.

Mistress Placidia's Laurel medallion starts out *huge* and over the course of the play (one per act) gets smaller. This can be seen as either: the 'Jesternizing' of the character, or the humbling of the character (or both).

We kept our sets pretty minimal, as it would have been a bear to lug all that around, and try to deal with scene changes, not to mention the fact that we wanted the action and dialog to be the important part of the show, not the scenery. As it is, there's enough stuff with four chairs for the camp scenes, the thrones, a bench, some tables ... the less you have to deal with, the better. In addition, most of the characters did minimal, if any, costume changes, even for Act IV (Twelfth Night). Makes it easier ...

Frick and Frack are comic relief. Period. Silly, but useful to keep things from getting *too* tense.

The Herald should be played pretty straight, but should be based on the things that heralds see in themselves as funny (chances are, the audience will get it -- it didn't hurt that the director was a former Kingdom herald ...). During the court in Act IV, he gets caught up in the shock like everyone else. In our production, King Leigh actually had to remind him to close court by tapping on the ceremony book ...

Tedia and Trivia, to throw a fun bit into the casting (which our audience definitely caught), were played by two *very* well known Laurels in the West. The reverse was true for the Laurel characters (across the board) -- none of them were Laurels at the time of production. The audience nearly died laughing on the line about "mere mortals like we ..."

Saltireshire in Act IV was a few members of the Shire of Crosston ("Saltireshire" was one of the names that they had considered for their group and their arms are mostly a saltire...) here in the West. These folk sat in the audience itself, and came forward when called. It blurred the line of demarcation between the audience and the actors just enough, that when "court" was closed by the herald, the audience chimed in with the cheers. It was rather spectacular, in its own way.

If you wish to switch the kingdoms around, you might want to use a local group in place of "Saltireshire". This may not translate well to another Kingdom, and might be easier to just leave the Kingdom references 'as is'. (Your call!)

(A video tape of our performance can be had -- contact us at the address on page 1 with a tape)