

Mumming Play -- May Day 2000:
In Which Matters of Consanguinity Become a Subject for Explication and Expostulation

– by Susan Galbraith and Laura Waterstripe

Characters:

Narrator: Maria Hosmer-Briggs

Queen Esmerelda: Mike Miller

Horatio, Royal Historian: Bob Hughes

The Doctor/Mohel: Susan Galbraith

King Simon the Sanguine: Nancy McCracken

The Faithful Servant: Tamara Wrisley

The Genealogist: Laura Waterstripe

Ribbonsteel Rapper – Syracuse's premier rapper sword team

NOTES:

1. According to the ancient doctrine of humours, one whose personality was dominated by blood was “sanguine” – happy & generous. The other humours were phlegm (hence “phlegmatic” - dull) and yellow & black bile (“choleric” – violent, vengeful, “melancholy” – lazy, sentimental)
2. The **mohel**, pronounced roughly “moil” or “moyel” does the Jewish **bris** – ritual circumcision.
3. Interjections shown on the right side of the page were ad-libs during rehearsal and may not appear in the performance – as, indeed, some other lines will doubtless be different when delivered.

Narrator:

Our kingdom is a peaceful place. The fields and hills are green
The sun shines bright, the birdies sing. And folks are rarely mean.

Our king is proud of all he sees, including his reflection
You never could accuse him of excessive introspection.

He is a good man, we all say. Fair-minded, always kind,
But soon he's going to pay the price for all that peace of mind.

King:

They call me Simon Sanguine, 'cause I always wear a smile
In me the humours are expressed with beauty, grace and style
The joys of kingship make me sing and cause my heart to swell
I rule my kingdom like my home, and do it very well.

(offstage: “That’s your head!”)

Queen:

Queen Esmerelda is my name, the consort of this man.
I stand beside him as he rules our happy little land.
We always do what Simon says, and that's alright by me
(aside) There's no point in debating men; they lack maturity.

But sometimes Simon doesn't know the proper things to say.
When that's the case, he turns to me to help show him the way.
If you think we're the weaker sex, then someone's fooling you.
Behind the scenes, it's crystal clear who is in charge of who.

King:

She suits me well. Who needs a wife with youth, or charm, or looks?
My Esme's healthy as an ox, and she balances the books!
She handles daily details so much better than I do.
And frees my mind to contemplate what's RIGHT and GOOD and TRUE.

Queen: Are you hungry, dear?

King: Oh, is it breakfast time?

Queen: What a good idea, dear! (*Shouts*): Simon says he's hungry!
(*offstage, loud echo*) Simon says he's hungry!

King: I'd like ice cream with fudge sauce.

Queen (loudly): Simon says bring us toast and orange juice!
(*offstage, loud echo*) Simon says bring toast and orange juice!

King: And ice cream
Queen: Bring ice cream (*offstage, loud echo*) Bring ice cream!

(*Servant enters with toast and orange juice on a tray*)
Servant (loudly and formally): Toast and orange juice.

King: (*pokes his finger at the tray*). But, where's my ice cream?

Servant (after significant pause): She didn't say, "Simon says!"

King (shrugs his shoulders, speaks to audience): You see?

King (continuing):
I'm not one of those people who can cope with shades of gray
If issues are not black and white, I have to turn away.
I guess that's just a feature of my personality. (*Queen:* "That's not a feature; that's a bug.")
I just have "zero tolerance" for ambiguity.

When things are out of balance, it's my job to make them RIGHT.
Until that's done, I cannot rest or feel the sunshine bright.

Narrator:
Struggle and strife are part of life since history began
The greatest predator on Earth's the creature known as Man.
And when two forces come to blows with word and pen or sword and gun
Some people stay to fight and die while others turn their tails and run.

It's hard to tell the good guys when we're squinting through the fog of time.
What's noble from one viewpoint, from another is an act of crime.

Historian:
In comes I, Horatio, the historian of this place,
With stories to instruct, and put a smile on every face.
I know the raw statistics and I guess at what they show (*Queen:* "He cooks his data.")
And when the truth appears confused, I tell it where to go.

I've had an inspiration that will serve my purpose grand,
And if it works, I soon will be the ruler of this land.
Our king has lived in ignorance about his ancestry
While I've learned all the branches of the royal family tree.

Dear sire, I hate to bring bad news, but sometimes that's my fate
My research has uncovered information you will hate.

Your dynasty was founded on the outcome of a war.
Your ancestor betrayed and killed the king who was before.

(Exclamations of dismay and diverse alarums)

I know your love of fairness, and the remedy is clear
Seek out the rightful ruler, and bring him to power here.

(Aside)

The Royal Genealogist is waiting in the wings
And I will ride to power on the good news that he brings.

King:

If treason brought me to the throne then I must abdicate,
My kingdom cannot rest upon another's ghastly fate.
Not Happy now, but Bloody Simon Sanguine is my name,
I must make restitution, or else end my life in shame.

(to Historian)

Make haste to find the rightful ruler of this troubled place
While I wear this false crown, there'll be no smile upon my face.

(Moans, Rubbing his hands) Out, damned spot! Out I say!

Genealogist:

I am the Genealogist, *(“With the light brown hair.”)* *(“In your dreams.”)*

And in my hand I have a list
That shows the lines of royal descent
Some are spiralled, some are bent
It may be hard to picture these
Complex relationships, so please
Let the royal rapper team show
Where the lines of pedigree go.

Rapper sword team enters and begins to dance. Partway through, the Genealogist interrupts them.
Stop!

It's hard to see the patterns here
These ribbons bright will make them clear. *(takes out two spools of wide, bright-colored ribbon)*
If you'll hold George's ribbon, please *(hands one spool to the King)*

It represents your ancestry
And I will hold to Phillip's line
And tell where it goes over time.
(The Queen ties the ribbon ends to two of the dancers, while the Genealogist continues.)

King George won the War of Cattle
In the most decisive battle.
George slew King Phillip, but Phillip had
Four daughters who took after Dad.
While George's kin sat on the throne
Phillip's struggled on alone
They found their safety in exile,
Raising sheep on Orkney Isle.
When Horatio's grandsire, Lord Expate
Was young and searching for a mate
He met with Phillip's distant niece
At Hastings Market selling fleece.

(offstage – “She fleeced him.”)

The dancers resume their movements and soon become hopelessly entangled. The King is entangled with them. They stop moving and slump together, unconscious.

Genealogist:

Although some lines are torn or dim.

King Phillips' blood leads here to*(hands spool to Horatio)* **HIM!**
Horatio, with false modesty: ME?

So if you seek to right old wrongs

Crown Horatio. Write him songs.

Historian (takes crown from entangled King):

In comes I, the heir restored.

(offstage: King Rogaine)

I'm proud to be your rightful lord.

My family suffered through the years.

Now YOU must suffer for their tears.

You cannot pay for what they lost.

The treasury won't bear the cost.

But it's a start. I want it ALL!

SHOW ME THE MONEY!

Send tax collectors through the town

Bring all your treasures to the Crown.

Then you'll be poorer than I've been

My curse is on your King and Queen!! *(Maniacal laugh)*

Queen:

As women know from times of old, two wrongs can never make a right.

But what are we to do right now? Can no one help us in our plight?

Doctor:

In comes I *(tottering in)*. I am the Mohel old

The Talmud is my guide, and I am bold.

Your cry for help is music to my ears.

'Cause frankly, no one's trusted me for years.

I can't show you my work. but I am always conscientious

For if I slip, my clients won't be adding to the census. *(he, he!)*

I did carve this *(holds up heavily-incised walking stick)*. It started out as a flagpole, but I got carried away.

My hands are steady, and my eyes are keen. *(waves knife wildly in shaking hands)*

And I am glad to help you, beautiful Queen. *(Queen grabs Mohel's arm, takes knife)*

But as you are a woman of great power

My blade is at your service, for this hour. *(Mohel talks while Queen cuts King and rappers loose)*

You're tangled up in bloodlines, if I rightly understand.

You're wondering who should be the rightful leader of this land.

Then let me offer up my thoughts for your consideration.

While working to unravel this dilemma for our nation.

I understand your malady. But this man *(gestures toward Horatio)* is no remedy.

As God has made a covenant to be the lord of man

A ruler owes his people all the power at his command.

A King who puts his people last ignores this holy trust *(pokes walking stick at Horatio)*

He is no righteous lord, and all his claims will turn to dust.

The rapper team and King are freed - the rapper dance continues to its normal end.
Horatio, nastily: Aren't they cute.

Meanwhile the Genealogist and the Mohel are huddled on the sidelines.

Genealogist re-enters:

Come! Hear! I've made a great discovery!
Important news for your recovery!
(Gestures toward Mohel)
With the help of this old man
I'm pleased to say that now I can
Fill in the blanks in my investigation
He's surely brought great tidings for our nation!

King Simon's mother, Rosabella **Reed**,
Was really Rosa **Rosenstern**, indeed
She changed her name to hide her lineage
But now you'll be glad of her parentage.
She was the child of Arthur Rosenstern
Whose wife was daughter of old Clyde McBurn
And he, great-grandson of Phillip the Fair
Who was defeated in the battle where
King George won the right to this kingdom's throne
.....Thus the true heir is -----King Simon, alone!

(Mohel: I remember Little Arthur!)

Huzzah! Huzzah! All rejoice, save Horatio *Horatio: Curses! Moheled again!*

Narrator:

We say "you get what you deserve," we hope that life is fair
That evil folk will not succeed, as long as good ones care.
But in each family history there's usually a catch
A person who was glad to keep whatever he could snatch.

There's no way to repair the past, no matter what we do.
So set your own high principles, to thine own self be true.
Spring is the time to start afresh and build a better day.
Now carry gladness as you go, and celebrate the May.

----- FINIS -----