

The Roving Gypsy

Sastimos! (To Your Health!)

It is the weekend of Love and Romance (as if the one day of Valentine's Day wasn't enough now we get three more). Take the time to let people know you care whether in a simple word or gesture.

Character Feature: Nikolai Ruslan Andronovich (also known as Mark Christopherson)

I've been asked by Auntie Tassels to tell the lot of you something about myself. For starters, I was born on the outskirts of Kiev, where my family winters each year. I haven't seen them for eight winters now, as I have a particularly nasty case of wanderlust brought about (at least in part) by my father Andronik. I suspect I'm not actually his son. I never got around to questioning him on the subject, though, and the last person who mentioned my lack of resemblance in his presence was found lying in the snow missing his right ear.

Needless to say, as soon as I was declared a man, I set out to see other lands. At first I was too naive for my own good, but several hard lessons cured me of that. Stealing money purses is not a viable way to make a living unless you're either very good or very fast on your feet. Thankfully I learned to run quickly.

I spent last winter in on the edge of some mountains in Germany with a luthier who had traveled with merchants in his youth and spoke a little Russian. As his wife had passed on without bearing him any children and he was too old for heavy labor, I spent most of the winter chopping and hauling firewood and trapping occasional game in exchange for lodging and meals. Towards the end of the winter he presented me with a fiddle he had made, saying "No one should have to steal to eat." I began learning to play, much to the chagrin of the local dogs.

When spring thawed the area I tagged along with a caravan of Traders making their way west. A month into the journey, however, I discovered their plans to sell me off as labor. I parted ways with them on the evening we pulled into Chamonix, taking with me a few of their easier-to-carry merchandises. They, of course, called the guards. I presented my knife as a "gift" to one of the guards on my way out of town (he was speechless). I've found my way to this particular village after running into Auntie and Kadriya in another small town earlier this summer. Having arrived here, I've decided I'm neither fond of the place and am contemplating settling down... for now...

Special Requests:

- ◆ The Amazing Christopher is looking for persons to help with hat passing during a couple of shows in the afternoon. He has made an offer of \$2/hat pass for 2 people if you are ever interested.

August 19 & 20 Events:

Weather: It was not much cooler than the previous week but humidity seemed a little lower. It definitely made a difference to stand in the shade than in the direct sun.

Gypsies in Action:

- Saturday and Sunday were event filled days for all the gypsies. Maggie made it a point to nag her sister Tassels sleep in too late on Sunday (mnmnh—time to get up already?)
- ◆ The first large entertainment bit in which the Gypsies participated was bop-a-peasant. (Remember that old game with the gophers and the mallet? Yeah. Like that.) Suzanna, Maggie, and Nikolai were worth twice the points of the peasants (go Gypsies!) though bopping Auntie Tassels earned negative points as she was the broken one. Bryn acted as the official photographer, recording the mayhem. Many patrons played, as did the Crown Prince.... though his efforts at score-counting unity worked about as well as ED's... but were considerably more entertaining. It seemed his Royal Highness had a particular interest in whacking the rogue Louis several times. It probably did not help that Louis was constantly badgering the prince.
 - ◆ Nikolai, Bryn, and Suzanna participated in the Peasant Precision Marching Squad beginning at Gypsy Stage and leading up to Shepherd's Green. Nikolai and Bryn were strapped to the boards with Hayrold, Pratt, and the Leper. Suzanna had the important role of rope-tier and stunt coordinator, helping to make sure "guests" did not get themselves run over (though I think this would have constituted Darwinian selection). After the village tug-o-war against the Scotsmen (villagers won -- because the Gypsies were there for luck, of course) Suzanna attempted a Peasant Precision Bunny Hop with a few of the peasants. After much practicing and Bryn's leadership, a couple hops were successful. The peasants are planning to practice a bit more before taking it on the road, though.
 - ◆ Chrysto was not with us this weekend, as he had decided that leaving the realm and giving the Royal Guard some time to cool down might be in his best interests. The remaining Gypsies still showed up to support his partner Hayrold in Vilification. We gave him the Peasant Rate Curse ("Curses!" *spit*) on Saturday, but due to customer dissatisfaction, we added "And your camel, too!" on Sunday.



- ◆ The Bear Jam was preceded by Scottish Dancers this weekend (Highland Fling). Dance Jam was well attended both days. On Sunday Tiny gave one little girl a wonderful vantage point on his shoulders as other Gypsies danced around them.
- ◆ Nikolai took some time to experience Celtic Weekend by dancing with a lassie in plaid on Sunday.
- ◆ It was also a music-heavy weekend; Nikolai added his fiddle's voice to two jams at the Mead Booth. The Mead Booth was kind enough to let Nikolai sample AFTER the sounding of the closing cannon (mmmmmm... Elderberry Mead.... can we vote this the official alcohol of the Gypsies?)
- ◆ The new band King's Shilling comes with high recommendations from Nikolai, Bryn, and Suzanna (and Lojo, if our word isn't enough).... check them out if you have the chance. Their songs are all original, though they sound as if they've been around for a couple hundred years.
- ◆ Bryn spent a considerable bit of time recruiting new Gypsies. Alas she did not convince any to join, though she marked quite a few likely candidates with ribbons from her braid.
- ◆ Maggie, Auntie Tassels, and Icabod (Tiny) spent some time down at the Queen's Pub singing with Mistress Bawd and Lady Emerrill. At one point Bawd was lifting her skirt slowly up her leg and Icabod 'dived' forward between some benches in a clamor to get a closer look :o). He also had a verse to contribute to "Roll You Leg Over." (*If all the young ladies were bottles of wine, I'd be a corkscrew and pop 'em in time!*)
- ◆ Maggie and Auntie Tassels observed while Icabod was the voice of Darius the Dragon. Jenny Zalar was up at the dragon's mouth calling out questions and comments the children were making. Icabod was sitting down with the adults under the tenting and asking them if their kid was up there and if they had done anything bad lately. We watched from afar as Darius then accused these younger children of not behaving. One little girl was frightened of the dragon but with Auntie Tassels gift of a charmed ring to keep the dragons away from her, she was more relieved.
- ◆ The Gypsies also attended Peasant Sing-Along and Volley Club. Heckling at the latter turned into quite a competitive sport since the Maypole girls decided to be cheerleaders on the other side of the playing field. They taunted us, but soon found the error in their ways as peasants and Gypsies gave chase and 'treed' them at their Maypole. (Virgins clinging to a phallic symbol.... hmmm.) They claimed to be cuter, but Thomas O'Dison countered with "But we've got Gypsies!" Finally, someone realizes our worth!
- ◆ Auntie Tassels finally had the opportunity to be 'waved' in the Mermaid Song on both closing gate days!! She shimmied and was heard saying "Oh What A Thrill!"

Events & Bits (scheduled, special events or general)

- ◆ Ye Old Survivor with the Rogues.
- ◆ Diana's 10 year old daughter (email on Listserve)
- ◆ Dancing for the Queen: she has indicated this is always a fun bit and appreciates any attention. Please avoid this on the hot days though.
- ◆ Wooing contest
- ◆ -Tiny as the Dance Jam Maypole (We're not virgins, but hey!)
- ◆ -Tagging the Thieves (and other rennies/patrons?) with bells
- ◆ Love and Romance: Rest in Peace?

Outside the Festival:

- ◆ Aunt Rene is short one opal ring. She thinks she loaned it to Chrysto for his stunt in drag last year, but is not sure. If anyone knows where it's gotten to, please to be returning it, thank you :)
- ◆ Rudy of the Queen's Pub was taken to St. Francis via Ambulance on Sunday morning. A bad case of kidney stones. He was home by Sunday night and we can look forward to seeing him again this upcoming weekend.

Next weekend & Visions of the Future:

- ◆ Curses, Blessings, and sayings—can never have enough.
- ◆ Begin preparing for the Peasant Olympics.

BLESSINGS AND SAFE TRAVELS UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN!

If anything was missed please let me know and feel free to contribute ideas, articles, or small pieces

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