

CONSORTS – Inspirational or Irrelevant?

A selection of thoughts

Consort

To participate in Crown Tournaments, every fighter must have a consort. The victor wins the title of King or Queen by Right of Arms and their consort becomes Queen or King for their inspiration and grace. Consort relationships are optional outside this context though assumed when fighters are called on to salute the person whose favour is carried. The decision whether or not to become consorts is up to the individuals, as is the way it is handled and the nature of the relationship.

Partially adapted from <https://cunнан.lochac.sca.org/index.php/Consort>

Inspiration is...the act of breathing into another so that they are strengthened and emboldened in their task, upon their path, and/or in their life.

Balancing the SCA and the Mundane
<https://myladymother.wordpress.com/2019/09/12/ryghtes-of-a-ladye-consorts-courtliness-and-civil-rights/>

Corpora, re Duties of the Martial Peerages:

....*To enhance the renown and defend the honour of the peer's Lady or Lord*

Fighting for Consorts

By declaring that we are fighting for a consort [at Crown Tourney], we aren't just saying that this person will rule with us if we win. We're saying that this other person inspires us by their virtues. We are saying that we are accountable to this other person, and that if we screw up and do something stupid, it will reflect badly on them, so we will do our best to bring honor to our consort by being on our best behavior. We're also saying that if we are discourteous, or brutish, and in any way unchivalrous, there is a person to talk to who will make our lives hell until we straighten up.

Some will say that this goes completely against the idea of each of us fighting honorably and calling our shots properly, and accepting the judgment of our opponents. My response is this: If you are secure in your honor, honesty and courtesy, on and off the field, you should have no problem telling the world who inspires you to such noble thoughts, words and deeds. Your actions on the field will reward your consort for the support you have received. People will know that your consort is a special person that brings out the best in you. If you are insecure, then your consort is your guide to being a better person, and you should strive to better yourself by your consort's example. It's important to fight for the right consort.

Rogan Sax <http://www.rogansax.com/sca/fighting/fightforaconsort>

The Romantic View

Chivalry, Honor and Love (abridged)

Mistress Wander Riordan

Let me win roses to twine in your hair,

A scepter to place in your hand.

You are the one I delight in the most,

My lady of all in the land

The grace of a sibling, the strength of a friend

The love that a consort may bring

Measures intention more forceful than blows,

And honor above every thing.

My will is thy honor displayed before all,

And courtesy, chivalry's pride,

Art in thy action and joy in thy glance,

And a place at the end by thy side.

My sword to thy service, my skill to thy grace,

That delight, in the midst of the fray,

Temper with mercy my skill and my speed:

Thy presence my strength and my stay.

My portion is stillness, attention and hope,

To watch, and to wait, and to ward.

Solace in silence or succour in mirth,

The honor you do my reward.

No greater favor could any achieve,

No striving show brighter, or prove.

Fare I now forth with thy work on my sleeve,

For chivalry, honor and love.

Salute then the sovereign, the crown and estate,

Thy worthy opponent, and me;

Though summer and winter may pass and return,

Thy lady I always shall be.

No Consort, No Inspiration, No Victory

In reality, everyone fights for different reasons: fun, competition, latent aggressive tendencies, to win titles, masochism, tassel hunting, renown, whatever. But in theory, chivalry dictates that we carry ourselves on the field with the highest ideals and these are generally related to our inspiration. Hopefully, this is our consort. That's why in the invocation of our royalty, the consort is accorded an equal share of the respect because [they] did just as much work inspiring you to the victory. No consort, no inspiration, no victory.

Sir Vladimir Ivanovich Kurgan

<https://chivalry.lochac.sca.org/recommendations/becoming-a-knight/>

Advice to Consorts – the Practicalities

If you are a consort...then it adds to both the game and to the relationship if you do things to make that person feel special, to inspire them. We all love to feel that we matter to someone and this can be done in many simple ways.

For example, if you are consort to a fighter then:

- Do your best to watch them when they fight for you
- Acknowledge their victories and commiserate in their defeats
- Ensure that they are looking after themselves
- Make sure they have water and food

If you are a fighter:

- Ensure that your consort has a comfortable place to sit in the shade and has everything that they need
- Make a point of saluting your consort
- If they can't watch your fight, let them know what happened
- If it is a rose tourney, make sure if you win a rose the first rose goes to your consort

You can both display consideration and courtesy:

- Be mindful of the favour that you wear, look after it, don't lose it
- Seek your consort out and welcome them at events
- Ensure you both have seats at the feast and lay out feasting gear
- Take turns to bear the load e.g. wash up the dishes
- Assist in carrying any of the equipment
- Make and exchange gifts...handmade or purchased
- Ensure you dance with your consort at least once during the feast

Dame Acacia de Navarre

<https://lochacchroniclers.wordpress.com/2012/07/20/what-is-a-consort-by-dame-acacia-de-navarra/>

The concept of the Inspiration also elevates the role of competition from a selfish desire to win at all costs.

Instead, what is desired is a performance that will bring both the combatant, and their Inspiration, honor.

Fighting to advance the honor of one's inspiration reaches back to the early roots of SCA tradition. In theory, it is this that makes our fighting noble rather than it just being an exercise in supporting our own egos.

Viscount Sir Rustam

From *Honored Values and Valued Objects: The Society for Creative Anachronism*;
Alathea Turner
<https://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/downloads/8c97ks88r>

Wearing a Sign of Favour

Consorts typically wear favours, a meaningful symbol of the bond, whether of love or friendship. These are traditionally worn by a fighter on the tourney field; sometimes also by the watching partner. (A favour can also represent household ties, royal patronage, a Peer-student relationship etc; multiple favours may be worn, practices vary across and within Kingdoms.) As well as the non-period SCA "tea towel" belt favour, people have used sleeves/tippets, garters, chemises, cloth strips, gloves, heraldic pennons, ribbons; generally something meaningful or recognisable, sometimes using arms or livery colours. A fighter may ask an audience member for a token to wear just for a bout or a tourney, making their salutes to them and returning the token thereafter.

I asked one of the ladies, whose favour I carry, as to why she wanted me to carry her favour. Her reply was simple and to the point. She likes the way I treat her with respect and honor, the way I speak to her, and the way I treat all the ladies that she knows. She also said that I was kind and gentle and she had a lot of respect for me and the way I act and interact with others, and as far as she was concerned, I honored her by carrying her favour.

Lord Cahan Kyle of Clan Kyle

<http://www.florilegium.org/files/ACCESS/favors-msg.html>