

## MATRIARCH

“Matriarch:” ‘tis a title of which I have always held in disdain. It was common with the American Indians. My ancestral Clarks, Lees, Henrys, Haneys, etc. and my wife’s ancestral Barrons, Gildeas, McDonoughs, etc., recognized a certain authority and even a domination by their wives in the dim past of Gaelic history.

And ‘tis me, a young vigorous man not yet seventy-one years old, lying flat on me back, with me sixty-five year old snip of a wife parading around ordering me to stay in bed where she put me, even making me put on pajamas. But I still had me pipe handy, though it didn’t taste right. Of course I was intendin’ to do that very thing, so it was not as if I was takin’ orders from the likes of her.

We had come a-visiting to this eighty acre farm to babysit with our three grandchildren, while our daughter and her slave, another downtrodden “Mick,” took a business-vacation trip to a warmer climate. They had left without a care, knowing that hickory-tough grandpa would be after taking care of everything.

We had arrived in typical Ohio January weather, as the temperature cooperated with the snow as it continued to fall.

The bugs got me down shortly after they had left, but I would not admit it until everyone turned against me, including two of my sons who were on their way home and happened to stop by. They each outweigh me by once and a half, but I can still whip them even if they don’t know it. And, bad cess to the both of them, they always take sides with their mother. So, nothing would do them but haul me away to a hospital where they had a doctor take a faked-up picture of me rugged chest, and I’ve no doubt that they bribed him to order me to bed on a diet of nasty medicine, after punching around on me

with his needle. And this, with all the good whiskey they could have bought me for a lot less money. They even went to the extent of calling my daughter in Dallas, Texas, who is a registered nurse, and the other of eight spalpeens. And the likes of her, me own daughter, giving me orders over the telephone.

‘Twas a sad day for the O’Haney, with her telling me what to do, and what not to do; as if I wouldn’t know what to do about a little thing like pneumonia.

And with all this scheming and behind the back planning, they dealt me the underhanded blow; they put the Matriarch in charge. And them knowing all the time that I would be doing the proper intelligent things without someone having to tell me to do this and not do that.

But I have the advantage of them. I’m remembering that the seventeenth of March is not far away and that me and my Leprechaun will be King for a day; so their domineering ways do not affect my sweet imperturbable nature.

I was watching “The Matriarch” this morning from my bedroom window, which is upstairs where the three grandchildren are under my stern eye while she is out. She was at the barn feeding the nine head of cattle, the two horses, and a pony. “Jesse,” the ever guardian Doberman, was with her, having an eye to the animals, stalking them with that proud, fearless demeanor of challenge, that dared even “Sampson,” the two thousand pound bull, to question the least desire of the Matriarch. The calico cat was also in attendance; a sort of “Maid in Waiting.”

And a vision appeared. The scene was bathed in early morning sunshine. The mockingbird we’d fed each day had ‘lighted on the pasture fence. The Matriarch’s pitchfork became a scepter, the slouch-hat became a halo-like tiara, the too-big coat was robes

of velvet and fine spun gold, and the mockingbird's song became the soft strains of a harp.

It was top o' the mornin' for the O'Haney and a proud day for himself.