

# The Month of May Arrives in Rivulus

## Dominarum





**M**ayus habet dies xxxi.  
luna vero xxx.

xviij b c Philippi et Jacobi.

v d Inuentio crucis.

xiii e f Johānis an̄ portā latinā.

ii g Domitiani ep̄i.



As Mr. Lionel Richard Coeur de Lion van Tcheluk had so rightly remarked, it was the month of May. At least, it was the month of May in Rivulus Dominarum. Mind you, he did not deny—in fact, he had a suspicion—that it might be May in various other places, such as the Principality of Lichtenstein or the Republic of San Marino, or even in France or Portugal. But he, at the present time, had no evidence of that, for he performed his trout fishing in Garlic Creek, and Garlic Creek was on Garlic Creek Street, and that street is located in our town, and not in some distant, Godforsaken foreign land. In short, Mr. Lionel van Tcheluk was wise enough (being the older of the two twin brothers van Tcheluk) to know that one can never be sure of things one does not see with one’s own eyes, hear with one’s own ears, or smell with one’s own nose, and that mental attitude he believed to be not only tenable, but also commendable in the highest degree.

With regard to identifying the current month, our concitizens unanimously agreed with him, and they did so based on indubitable facts. In truth, it had been Monsignor Johannes Marignolli who first brought the news, for, as he had been riding his bike past St. Joseph’s one day, he had noticed that Father Philippe’s ancestors, perched on the branches of the Padre’s tree of consanguinity, were no longer singing fourteenth-century motets, opting instead for *Sumer is incumen in/Lhude sing cuccu*. And although the song was visibly referring to a summer month, everybody knew that cuckoos regularly returned to our part of the world in May, in spite of May being known as one of the spring months. Initially baffled by such inadvertency, some folks had once approached Mrs. Bonaventure, the Vice President of the Association for the Preservation of the Middle Ages Among Us, demanding an explanation. A town meeting had been held at which Mrs. Bonaventure had pointed out that those cuckoos who came back to us had no idea of our own classification of the months of the year, therefore they felt free to come and go as they pleased. Besides, she said, it may be that in certain parts of medieval England (for the song’s lyrics were clearly in some form of middle English) the birds only arrived in summer—but Albion was a perfidious realm, you could never trust her to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And that was that.

A day or two after Monsignor Marignolli’s report, Sisters Chiara and Imelda noticed that the mini-dragons densely populating the trees of love and spiritual virtues in the apothecary herb garden were picking up that song, although it had nothing to do with the customary Gregorian chants in Mode 1 (Dorian) and Mode 2 (Hypodorian) which they were in the habit of singing. Furthermore, Mesdames Bonaventure, Bacon, and Grosseteste, while taking a leisurely walk in the Municipal Park (this happened shortly before Mrs. Grosseteste’s banquet-related misadventures) remarked that young and fresh *minimae*, *breae*, *longae*, *duplex longae*, and *maximae* had appeared in the trees of note shapes lining the main alley—and this, based on centuries’ experience, was a sure sign that the month of May had arrived.



As an avid observer of nature and a member of the local Association of Biology Enthusiasts, Mr. Simon T. Unstede, the blacksmith, maintained that he, too, was positive that May was here, as he’d noticed large flocks of barnacle geese flying eastward—which is what they did at this time of the year. In addition, he was in the position to ascertain that it must be the same month in the Netherlands as well, for that is the month when the aforesaid geese leave behind the moors of Assen and start their journey to Siberia to lay their eggs. Mr. Unstede also reported that one of the geese in one particular flock seemed to be in some type of distress as it was

calling ‘mayday, mayday, mayday’ whilst flying over the Carthusian friars’ vegetable garden (adjacent to his own yard) and dropping what turned out to be the stolen Dacian helmet. In conclusion, he was confident that our town was experiencing the month of May at its fullest, and that every day of the month was a May Day.

And Fra Dolcino was rumored to have lost interest in declaiming inflammatory speeches to the assembly of wine bottles in his Old Town shop—rather, some people said, he had been seen and heard practicing the tenor part of a certain *Fa-la-la* song which was later identified as Thomas Morley’s *Now is the Month of Maying*. In doing so, the same people said, Fra Dolcino was making an unpardonable mistake: as a member of the Association for the Preservation of the Middle Ages Among Us, he should have stuck with some medieval form of welcoming the month in question instead of paying tribute to a Renaissance composer. Consequently, he was reported as a traitor to the cause to Mrs. Bonaventure, who penned a heavy reprimand which was sent to Fra Dolcino via air mail; this ensured he’d get the letter promptly, in about three weeks, rather than the two days it would have taken, had it been sent as a piece of snail mail.



Finally, folks noticed that lately a bull (*Taurus*)—which they initially mistook for Mrs. Bacon’s chimaera—was roaming through the cobblestone streets of Old Town at all sorts of times, but mostly at ungodly hours. The animal was reported taking occasional baths in the Fountain of Youth, or giving dirty looks to the wigs displayed in the window of William of Ockham’s barber shop across the square. Some of these wigs were not only outrageously long and curly, but also bright red in color, for that was Mr. Ockham’s favorite hue. However, it did not appear to be the beast’s preferred hue. In truth, it seemed to irritate the animal, which was seen on numerous occasions attempting to attack the display window, and one early morning Mr. Ockham woke up to find the window broken, the red wigs torn to pieces, and two bottles of his finest wine, a vintage Burgundy, empty and swimming in the crystal-clear waters of the Fountain of Youth. The arrival and settling in of the bull, as well as its unhinged behavior compounded by heavy alcohol

consumption were taken to indicate that for all practical purposes the month of May was in town, and that it meant to stay here for a while.