

Comedic blast from the past makes geek chic ... finally

This Fathers' Day, dads and lads across America enjoyed wonderful quality time together. Some played catch in the backyard. Others went to their favorite fishing hole. Most of us, however, went to New York, put on a King Arthur costume and galloped up Broadway banging coconuts. All right, maybe just me.

"Spamalot," based on the movie "Monty Python and the Holy Grail," is a big hit on Broadway. It won the Tony for best musical; tickets are impossible to get. Impossible, that is, unless you and your son ordered them online months ago.

I've loved Monty Python ever since my geeky teen years (which, as my wife points out, show no signs of being over). "Holy Grail" came out my freshman year of high school. When we first saw the ad, my two socially challenged friends and I thought this would be a great way to try something called "dating."

As far as we could tell, dating meant you spent time with a girl in a prearranged social activity. If you paid her way, you could, well, hang out with a pretty girl. We thought the concept intriguing, and were eager to beta test it.

We sent invitations to the eight prettiest girls in our class. (We decided on eight so that in the theater we'd each have a girl on both sides without having to share. We figured a 75 percent hit ratio was reasonable). Amazingly enough, they all said yes, so the 11 of us staked out a row in the Continental Theater.

Eight girls and three guys, though, meant two extra girls on the ends. I don't remember who they were, but I hope they weren't too mad. I probably should have been more considerate, but I was laughing so hard at the film I couldn't think of too much else. It was only later I learned a key element of dating was paying attention to the girl involved.

Actually, there were a lot of things about dating that took me a while to learn. But I must have mastered at least some of them when I got to college, because there I convinced a cute girl to marry me. When our son became old enough to appreciate Monty Python, I showed him a VHS tape of "Holy



OPINION

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Grail." He was hooked. So hooked that he decided to shoot his own digital version, angle for angle, shot for shot, using friends and neighbors in the starring roles. Mom and sis helped with the costumes. We took those to New York.

Posing outside the theater, we must have been stopped by a dozen tourists wanting pictures. The show's producer introduced himself, asking where we were from and if we needed anything. "Colorado Springs, and no thank you." I should've told him about that play I've been working on.

We watched the show in costume (though I did take the crown off). During intermission, we galloped down the aisle to thunderous applause. But the best moment came after the show. Four girls walked up to us: "You guys are so cool, can we pose with you?"

Cool? Dressing up in Arthur and Lancelot costumes is cool? Girls want to be photographed next to Python geeks? It may have taken 30 years, but it was worth it.

Hard to believe it's been three decades. Two summers ago, I went back home for my 25th high school reunion. Most of the girls from Date Night 1.0 were there, and they still remembered it. (They brought it up, not me, I promise!) They all insisted they had a great time, including the girls on the ends. Nice to get some closure.

Soon I'll be thinking about a different high school graduation. I didn't just get on a plane to see "Spamalot." My son and I went to look at colleges. He'll be leaving home next year.

I don't know where he'll wind up. But I hope it'll someplace wonderful, where he'll pick a wonderful major and meet a wonderful girl. Perhaps someday I'll celebrate a Fathers' Day with a grandchild of my own. We'll watch "Holy Grail" on some technology that hasn't been invented yet.

Or maybe we'll just play catch in the backyard.

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