

THE AUTHORS SHOW – Historical Fiction

Author: S. H. Montgomery

I agree with Gustave Flaubert when he said: *It's a delicious thing to write. To be no longer yourself but to move in an entire universe of your own creating.*

That is definitely what I did when I wrote *Honor in the Blood*, the sequel to my novel, *Whisper in the Blood*, because growing up in a small town in Texas I knew nothing about Italians, Irish, Mafia or Druids.

Honor in the Blood is the story of Francesca and Fin Callahan's son and his coming of age. The Italian patriarch, Vito Savio, and member of the Chicago Outfit, and the Irish matriarch, Meghan Callahan, an imperious Druid, vie to mold their grandson to their ways from day one. Following is a scene of Kane Callahan's birth and before his christening when both grandparents lay eyes on their grandson for the first time.

It was a crisp October day in 1950 when Kane Joseph Callahan was born. It was the kind of fall day when leaves still crackled underfoot and ominous gray clouds scudded across a steely sky announcing an impending storm. Inside Fin and Francesca's tiny apartment the atmosphere was sunny and happy when they saw their son's scrunched-up face. Dr. Cipriano gave the baby's bottom a good smack, then another, yet the eight-pound baby boy didn't make a whimper. Dr. Cipriano appeared mystified.

"The baby seems to be breathing well, but this is, indeed, strange." Dr. Cipriano's hand hit the child's backside again. "I've never seen a newborn not cry when it entered the world. I predict your new son is going to be an unusually strong child."

At home, Meghan was jubilant when she heard this news. It was a good sign, as was the Celtic name of Kane, which meant warrior. It thrilled her that an Italian name hadn't been chosen.

Gathering her coat around her to ward off the screaming wind, Meghan went outside to the birdbath that she used as an altar for her Druid activities. Shivering, she finally warmed after sitting in front of it for a few minutes. Rubbing the beryl stone hanging from her neck, her mind

traveled to a place where few were able to go. She foresaw that this grandchild would be hers to teach the Druid ways that would make him strong as he grew into manhood. And perhaps, unlike her son and husband, who had disappointed her, this boy would one day become a high-ranking political figure. There was still a chance to be part of the social strata she'd always dreamed.

When Michael heard he had a grandson, he immediately quit the law case he was working on, left the office, and headed for his son's apartment. On the way, he relived the day Fin was born. How he'd come into the world too early and if he had not had the constant nursing of Dr. Finley and Aunt Kitty he wouldn't have survived. Michael felt remorse remembering the Fin's twin who was stillborn, and how he and Meghan had buried the child without a name. He wondered how Meghan would feel about her grandson. Since she had never been loving and warm toward Fin, would she act the same with this baby?

The Savio household was excited with the announcement of Francesca's first born. Maria thrilled by the birth left home to help Francesca. The Savio brothers toasted the family's newest addition with Vito's homemade wine and smoked big, black cigars in honor of the baby. Pietro, despite having three of his own, was delighted for his little sister as was Carlo.

Gino had always shared a special bond with Francesca. In his mind, he was already going with his nephew to baseball games, educating him about the wiles of women, and instructing him on the ins and outs of gambling.

While Vito's sons were toasting and chin wagging, Vito sat in his chair knowing in his heart that this new grandson would be special, just as Francesca had always been special to him. He had never felt this with Pietro's sons, but this boy, when he became older, Vito would take under his wing and teach him how to be a man with honor. A man whose will could never be broken.

Three weeks later at the christening, Vito and Meghan had yet to see their grandson. After the frightful lunch with Francesca, Meghan had vowed never to visit the apartment again and had stuck to it. Even for the boy who Meghan knew was to be hers to mold, she made no

concession. Vito, on the other hand, wanted to climb the stairs to the third floor to see his new grandson, but it was too difficult for him with his arthritic legs.

Now at the church, prior to the ceremony, Meghan and Vito vied for a first glimpse of their grandson. They elbowed each other in order to get a good view of the chubby baby lying in Fin's arms. Dressed in a long white christening gown, Kane's walnut-brown eyes seemed to be gazing at both grandparents as they fought over him. What looked to be a smile, though obviously gas, crossed the cherub's face.

"I think the little bambino already recognizes me," said Vito.

"Don't be ridiculous." Meghan nudged him out of the way for a better look.

Vito ground his cane into her foot and edged in front of her.

"Ouch!"

"Come on. Behave. You'll scare him. If he cries Francesca will have my head." Fin glared at his mother and snuggled the baby closer, protecting his son from the contention.

"Nothing can scare me a stór." Meghan tried to peer over Vito's shoulder.

But Vito had now positioned his burly body in order to bar her advancement. A shadow of confusion crossed Vito's face at Meghan's Irish word.

Then in the background, he heard Michael mutter, "Her treasure?"

Vito growled, "He ain't your treasure."

Meghan had just raised her handbag to bop Vito on the head when Francesca stepped into the narthex.