

EXAMPLE SHORT NONFICTION STORY

Prompt: Write a biography about a real person who chose an unusual life. Show how this character faced unusual challenges. Make sure that the story contains at least five paragraphs, all the elements of a story, and a reference list containing at least three references. Use the MLA style.

TITLE OF THE STORY: Pirate Queen

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European History

2 February 2018

Pirate Queen

Grace O'Malley was born in Clew Bay, County Mayo, Ireland, in 1530 into a famous seafaring family (Halloway 1). Importantly, she was the daughter of a renowned sea captain, Owen "Black Oak" O'Malley. He was the chieftain of his clan and captain of a fleet of ships. Also of importance, she was the only child of her father and her mother. Her father was a trader and sailed his ships to other countries to trade for goods for Ireland. People believe that she either lived with her parents or a foster family as a very young girl. They also believe that she was well educated since she spoke Latin to Queen Elizabeth I later in her life.

From the time she was very young, Grace was fascinated with sailing ships. She wanted to sail very badly and begged her father to take her sailing and told him that she wanted to be a sailor. However, in those days, girls did not become sailors. They were expected to remain in the home. Thus, at first, her father took her on short safe trips. As she got a bit older, though, she wanted to go on longer trading trips to other countries. She was told that she could not go because her long hair would catch in the ropes of the ship, and she would get hurt. In response, she cut off most of her hair to embarrass her father into allowing her to go with him. She was given the nickname "Grainne Mhaol" (meaning "bald" or "having cropped hair") ("Grace O'Malley," 1). Finally, when she was allowed to go on these longer trips, she was made to promise that she would go below deck or stay in her father's cabin if there were any sign of danger. She agreed.

From that time forward, Grace spent the rest of her childhood sailing with her father to foreign lands. She had several opportunities to demonstrate her skills and courage. In one instance, when she was a teenager, her father's ship was attacked by English pirates. Instead of going below deck, she remained in the rigging of the ship. She watched the battle from above the sailors and pirates. She noticed an English pirate sneaking up on her father and raising a dagger behind her father's back. Grace leaped off of the rigging, fell through the air, and landed on the pirate's back. She saved her father's life. Moreover, she distracted the pirates enough that the O'Malleys regained control of the ship and defeated the English pirates. Her father was grateful for her help and bravery.

Through many trips, Grace learned the ways of the sea and became an accomplished sailor. When she was sixteen years old, she married her first husband, Donal O'Flaherty. Donal, son of the chieftain of the O'Flaherty clan, was next in line to become chieftain. Happily, they were married for 8 years and had three children: Owen, Murrough, and Margaret ("Grace O'Malley" 1). Unfortunately, Donal was killed in a battle against a rival clan. Grace remarried a couple of times.

Throughout her adult life, Grace continued to sail, and she eventually owned her own fleet of ships. In fact, Grace became a pirate and attacked Turkish and Spanish pirate ships and even the English fleets. She became known for her ability to lead her crews into battle, rallying them when they were overwhelmed by attackers. Not surprisingly, her wealth grew. She not only owned ships, she owned several islands and castles on the West Coast of Ireland. After a long life of loving ships, she died in 1603 ("Halloway" 1). While some believe that she died in battle while raiding a ship, others reported that she died in her castle at Rockfleet. Although leading men was an unusual activity for a woman in those

days, Grace earned the respect of all who followed her through her shrewdness, knowledge of sailing, and bravery at sea.

Works Cited

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