

It isn't like this really

Scene: Dumbletown Tourist Office. A tourist (T) is trying to find out some information about the town and is met by a Guide (G) who clearly doesn't tell it as it is.

G Good morning madam, can I help you?

T Yes, I'm staying in the Station Hotel for a few days and I was looking for things to do around town

G You've certainly come to the right place. What sorts of things are you interested in doing?

T Well, I understand that there was a Civil War battle here in 1644. I'm quite interested in taking a look at it as I know quite a lot about the English Civil War.

G Ah yes. Now that was where Oliver Cromwell beat the Royalist forces. There's quite a tale to it you know.

T So I hear. The town seems to be at the centre of quite a local legend. So tell me more.

G Well, Cromwell was holed up in the Old Manor House, totally surrounded by Royalist troops, when he saw a spider making its web with great difficulty.

T Aren't you confusing Cromwell with Robert the Bruce?

G No, I'm not. The spider's name was Mike and he said "Fear not Cromwell, for your rescue will come from on high." Cromwell was taken aback at this and fell into a state of fervent prayer.

T You're making this up.

G No I'm not. If you don't believe me, then go to The Old Manor House and find out for yourself. You get £2 off with this special promotional voucher. On the other hand, you could go to Mike's Cafe which people think could be named after Mike the Spider.

T Or perhaps the proprietor is called Mike?

G Just a coincidence but mention my name and he'll give you scones at two for the price of one. As I was saying, Cromwell prayed and out of the sky flew a man riding on what looked like a sleigh. The Royalists saw it and fled with terror and ever since then a man riding a sleigh pulled by reindeer has been a symbol of this town. We call him Father Dumble.

T That all sounds like Father Christmas to me!

G That said, the costume comes in handy for both Christmas and the annual Father Dumble civic celebrations where he brings the children packets of jelly Roundheads and Cromwell gingerbread men. Our Cromwell story is the whole basis for the tourist trade. People come from afar to the town – almost like pilgrims. Why don't you visit the Father Dumble souvenir store or possibly the Father Dumble Experience or even the Father Dumble Memorial Chapel. I can get you discounts for all of them.

T But it's all a sham isn't it? Everybody knows that all the Battle of Dumbletown was just a skirmish and that Cromwell outflanked the Royalists and sent them into retreat. It's an interesting story and all in Cromwell's own accounts of the skirmish. Cromwell was a man of prayer and encouraged each of his men to pray too. But perhaps it's the freedoms that Cromwell won for us that we should be celebrating such as freedom of religion and freedom of speech. All you lot seem to be doing is cashing in on some pathetic legend.

G Pathetic legend! How dare you! Wash your mouth out with soap. Our children would be gutted if you suggested that Father Dumble was not real.

- T And half of your town's economy would go out of business! By the sounds of it, you'd be out of pocket yourself with all your vouchers and discounts.
- G How dare you question my integrity. .
- T All the same, I think I might go to the regional tourist office where I might get some more accurate information. A good day to you.
- G Goodbye (*to audience*) Silly woman. People like her spoil the spirit of our Dumble celebrations. I so hate kill-joys like her. Never let the truth get in the way of a good – and profitable – story.

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen.

Romans 1: 20-23, 25

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