

GIDEON

No! Just sometimes.

ALANNA

Whereas I am destined to ascend to the throne of my country.

GIDEON

When, exactly --

ALANNA

Soon.

SEE THE QUEEN
SO LOVELY AND REGAL
SHE TELLS US WHAT'S LEGAL
OH, QUEEN!
YOUR ENEMIES FLEE YOU
HOW LOVELY TO BE YOU
HOW HONORED, HOW NOBLE
HOW SOCIALLY MOBILE
HOW NOTICED, HOW VALUED, HOW... SEEN

(more reflectively, forgetting Gideon)

HERE'S A HIGBORN GIRL, CLEVER AND BORED
SHE'S BROUGHT TO EVENTS WHERE SHE'S LARGELY IGNORED
SHE WEARS WHAT THEY GIVE HER
SHE DOES WHAT THEY SAY
SHE HAS SOME IDEAS BUT SHE'S TOLD THAT THEY GET IN THE WAY
BUT SHE WILL INHERIT THE QUEENDOM ONE DAY
THEN I'LL MATTER BECAUSE I'LL BE ROYALTY
I'LL BE VALUED, AND I WILL BE FREE
I'LL SPEAK IMPERIOUSLY, BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY
SO WE WAIT FOR THAT FORTUNATE DATE
WHEN WE'RE USHERED BY FATE
TO OUR PROPER ESTATE
IT'LL BE RATHER GREAT
WHEN THE WORLD PUTS US WHERE WE SHOULD BE!

(seems to remember where she is)

Oh! I probably shouldn't have told you all of that.

GIDEON

It's okay. I know what it's like to want to be something that you're not.

ALANNA

(delighted)

Then it's decided! You'll be the one to die!

GIDEON

That's what a Cavalier would do. But... I'm on a mission to save a Cavalier! I have to be alive for that!

ALANNA

(less delighted. advancing on Gideon, who backs up)

Oh, I see. So it's perfectly okay to let me die, is that it?

(Gideon is backed up against the bars. We hear a thud... and then crumble of stone from above)

ALANNA

(looks around, glances up)

Hmm. Interesting. There appears to be a gap in the bars near the ceiling. But it's too tall to climb.

GIDEON

If we help each other, we can reach it! And we can climb out and escape!

ALANNA

Oh splendid! We shall work as partners. Now bend over so I can use you as a stepladder.

GIDEON

(eyeing the guard)

If that guard wakes up he'll shoot whoever's trying to escape.

ALANNA

He's passed out. Help me up.

GIDEON

He could wake at any second.

ALANNA

Thank you for your opinion. Now bend over, that's a lad.

GIDEON

It's too dangerous.

ALANNA

Stableboy, I have given you an order!

GIDEON

(not budging)

It's like you said, I'm just a commoner. If anyone should take the risk, it should be me.

ALANNA

(not willing to admit that he has a point)
I can see you're going to be stubborn about this.

TROUBADOUR

Alanna interlaced her hands to support Gideon as he climbed up.

(ALANNA kneels and interlaces her hands. GIDEON steps into them --)

ALANNA

Ugh, whatever is on your boots? Ow! Would you --

TROUBADOUR

Gideon made it over the top of the bars and jumped to the ground outside!

(-- and manages to pull himself up to the top of the cage. He slips through the gap and clambers down to the ground, outside the cage.)

ALANNA

(whispering, as GIDEON executes each step)
Now to that sleeping bandit! He's got the keys! Good! Now unlock the door! Ah, it is so good to be out of that place, it's decidedly working class. Let us flee!

(ALANNA sprints a few paces, but:)

GIDEON

(looking offstage towards where the bandits are)
My horse!

ALANNA

Do you know how fleeing works?

GIDEON

I can't abandon Aspiration. Wait here.

ALANNA

That's where the bandits are!! This is the opposite of escaping!

ALANNA

Whatever are you doing up in that tree?

GIDEON

(climbing down)

I see where the Great Highway ends at the forest. Which means the cavalier must be somewhere that way.

ALANNA

I haven't any idea what you're talking about.

GIDEON

(jumping the final distance to the ground)

I'm following a cavalier. He's in great danger and I have to warn him. There's a Blundersnorp in these woods!

ALANNA

(her concern evaporates)

Is that what he told you?

GIDEON

No, he doesn't know. That's why I have to warn him!

ALANNA

No one's seen a Blundersnorp in hundreds of years!

GIDEON

There was a big announcement from the king! I heard it!

ALANNA

Stableboy, my people are wardens of the Great Forest and all lands to its north. If there was a giant monster on the loose, I quite think we would know about it.

(There is a blood-curdling ROAR in the near distance.)

ALANNA

I'm sure that was just the wind.

(Another ROAR, even louder than the first. A distant shout -- of a human being -- and the ring of steel. ASPIRATION whinnies nervously.)

GIDEON

It's coming from over there.

(to Aspiration)

Stay here girl.

ALANNA

I'm sure there's a... scientific...

GIDEON

Come on!

(The two of them run to an adjacent clearing in the woods. The sounds of combat grow louder.)

SCENE 7

TROUBADOUR

This part of the story requires some imagination. Accounts of what a Blundersnorp looks like differ widely.

(pages through a monster tome)

Some say it's a giant lizard, others insist it's a rolling thing with a shell, and still others call it a magical blend of an owl and a bear. But storytellers generally agree that the Blundersnorp was large, hungry, and distinctly terrifying.

(GIDEON and ALANNA stumble into another clearing where before them rises a giant monster -- the Blundersnorp! It sings in a collective voice. **7. The Blundersnorp**)

(Blundersnorp Incident #1:)

BLUNDERSNORP

ANGRY, HUNGRY

ANGRY, HUNGRY

ANGRY, HUNGRY

ANGRY, HUNGRY

(Facing the creature is SIR HALLOCK, leaning against a tree for support. His armor is dented, and his cloak torn. He keeps his weight off one leg, which is bleeding. He fends off the Blundersnorp with his sword. The action freezes.)

ALANNA

That's distinctly terrifying!

(The TROUBADOUR gestures to the monster tome. *Told you so.*)

TROUBADOUR