

REN FAIRE VERSUS ALIENS

Written by
Harry Aspinwall

Copyright (c) 2022

www.darktowerfilms.com
www.harryaspinwall.com

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY (DREAM)

SOUNDS OF BATTLE, cries, clashing of steel - dull, as though underwater.

ZOE WINTER (18) stands decked in resplendent armour, stained with mud and blood. She wears a crown.

She looks around. Everywhere battle rages, and her warriors are being cut down. One swordsman (BEN) drops to his knees, clasp ing a fatal gut wound. Another spearman (QUINN) reaches out a bloodsoaked hand to Zoe.

SPEARMAN (QUINN)
Please, my lady! Save us!

Zoe is distraught. She pulls her sword from its sheath but doesn't know which way to turn.

A berserker (BRIDGET), face smeared with war paint, calls out to her.

BERSERKER (BRIDGET)
My queen, what should we do?

Zoe hesitates, unsure.

SINISTER LAUGHTER resounds.

ENEMY GENERAL (O.S.)
Queen? This is no queen.

A massive armoured juggernaut, the ENEMY GENERAL, looms over her. Zoe raises her sword with shaking hands.

ENEMY GENERAL
She's just a scared little girl.

Enemy warriors pour out from behind the general, overwhelming her. Her sword flies from her hand, and she lands heavily. Her ears RING.

The General looms over her, stretching out a brutal armoured hand. Zoe fumbles for her sword, but it's just out of reach. The RINGING grows louder.

Too late. The General's hand closes over her face, blocking everything out. The RINGING reaches a crescendo, screeching, transforming into ...

INT. WINTER HOUSE - ZOE'S BEDROOM - DAY

... the RINGING of her alarm clock.

Zoe Winter, recent high school grad, drags herself messily awake. Little armoured action figures with swords on her nightstand are scattered to the floor as she tries to shut off the alarm.

She grabs her calendar and looks at it blearily. Today - the big day - is circled.

Zoe sighs. She rises and gazes straight ahead at the wall.

ZOE
(timid)
I'm not sure about this. What should
I do?

On the wall is a poster of Game of Thrones hero Jon Snow, looking pensive as ever.

ZOE (O.S.)
(as Jon Snow)
You can do this, Zoe. I believe in
you.

She smiles.

ZOE
Thank you. It means a lot, coming
from you.

She leans in to kiss the poster once, then pulls back. A beat, then she comes back in.

ZOE (cont'd)
One more.

She kisses the poster.

INT. WINTER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Zoe comes downstairs, very seriously practicing imaginary fight choreography sword swings with her phone.

MARK WINTER (40s), Zoe's dad, is at the counter, trying to wedge a spatula into a toaster.

MARK WINTER
Morning, tiger cub!

ZOE
What are you doing?

MARK WINTER
Ah, I dropped my Staples reward card
in the toaster.

ZOE
Oh.

She sits down and helps herself to a plate of bacon and eggs. On the wall behind her is a trophy shelf. It's completely empty, save for one bronze National Latin Exam medal.

ZOE (cont'd)
I had that dream again.

MARK WINTER
Got it! No wait, that's my insurance
card.

He continues to dig with the spatula. Then he registers Zoe's silence.

MARK WINTER (cont'd)
Uhh ... do you want to talk about it?

He takes a carton of milk from the fridge and starts to pour it in his coffee.

ZOE
Everyone was dying in battle, and I
was like WAIT -

She gestures to the milk.

ZOE (cont'd)
That's cow milk.

He freezes. She takes almond milk out of the fridge and hands it to him.

ZOE (cont'd)
Anyway, I was their leader. I felt
like I was responsible, like
everything rested on my shoulders.

Mark taps his fingers and tries to think of something to say.

MARK WINTER
Hmmm. Hey, did I ever tell you about
when I first started my vet clinic?
I'd been working so long to open my
own practice.
(MORE)

MARK WINTER (cont'd)
The very first day there was a feline salmonella outbreak, and I had to deal with it completely by myself. I knew I had to step up. It was all on me.

ZOE
What happened?

Mark wasn't expecting a followup.

MARK WINTER
It was all on me, all over me. Diarrhea everywhere, even on the ceiling. I kept changing scrubs but I ran out before noon and spent the rest of the day wrapped in a towel. It was a disaster, worst day of my life.

Silence.

MARK WINTER (cont'd)
How the heck do they make almond milk? That's just nuts.

ZOE
Bye, dad.

She turns to go.

MARK WINTER
Zoe ...

For a moment, it seems like he's about to say something heartfelt. Then he holds out his truck keys.

MARK WINTER (cont'd)
Bring the steed back in one piece.

She grabs the keys. Mark holds onto them, then finally forces himself to let go.

EXT. WINTER HOUSE - DAY

Zoe buckles herself into her dad's pickup truck in the driveway and starts the ignition. The RADIO comes on automatically.

Ignoring it, she checks herself in the rear-view mirror.

RADIO (V.O.)
 - from a team of NASA scientists, who
 we're being told have breaking news.
 At 6:39 this morning, the Department
 of Defense issued a notice to the
 Associated Press that anomalous
 readings -

She heaves a heavy sigh, psyching herself up for the day ahead, and switches the radio to bluetooth. A HEAVY METAL SONG thunders out of the vehicle.

EXT. HILLSBOROUGH STREET - DAY

A lovely day in a small town. A GARDENER tends to her flowerpots.

An ELDERLY MAN stands on the sidewalk near the fields and the local state park, waiting for his dog to finish peeing. He looks up as the HEAVY METAL booms down the street towards him. Recognising Zoe, he smiles and waves.

Zoe waves back, and rolls on down through sleepy little Hillsborough.

EXT. HILLSBOROUGH PARK ENTRANCE - DAY

A dirt road between trees, leading into Hillsborough's little state park and fairground. Zoe practices her lines under her breath.

ZOE
 False young knave, thou must know
 that I shall one day be queen, and
... I shall one day be queen and ...

Screech. Trying to call up the line on her phone, she narrowly avoids careening into the ditch.

A cop car sits nearby. As Zoe swerves back onto the road, two cops (BENSON and DZIEDZIC) look up from their phones and wave to her.

Zoe catches her breath and pulls up through a wide gate.

ZOE (cont'd)
 Here we go.

She passes under a banner: "HILLSBOROUGH RENAISSANCE FAIRE - OPENING DAY!!!" Images of two impressive knights with gleaming swords frame the text, resplendent.

CUT TO:

INT. PARK SERVICE BUILDING - DAY

GENE PALUMBO (50s), the ren faire's "king", hands out wooden swords.

GENE

These are what we're legally allowed
to have. Use your imagination.

A shabby park service building. Rows of clothing racks have been set up, holding veils, doublets, hose, tights, and various other articles of medieval and renaissance garb.

Zoe and her high school friend BEN ORTEGA (18) are half in costume, leather armour buckled over royal ruffles. Shakily, muttering the moves, Zoe practices their fight choreography with her wooden sword.

GENE (cont'd)

(to himself)

Has anyone seen Mikayla? This is
getting serious.

QUINN SPARACELLO (40s), a very serious historical reenactor wearing a t-shirt and jean shorts with a loud jester's hat, emerges at Gene's shoulder.

QUINN

Hath anyone seen the Lady Mikayla?
'Tis serious, forsooth.

Zoe presses the attack: jab, riposte, block, overhead sweep. It's clumsy, and painfully deliberate. A false move, and she hits Ben in the elbow.

BEN

Ow, fuck.

QUINN

(under his breath)

That's not historically accurate.

Quinn gives Ben the side-eye and adjusts his jean shorts.

BEN

Why do you care, Quinn?

QUINN

Quinn? Who is Quinn? I, Dagonetto
Hop-Frog the Jester, care because
history is precious, forsooth!

(MORE)

QUINN (cont'd)
'Tis a golden era, removed from
loathsome modern cares, like "social
media", and "pop culture", and
crippling, crippling debt.

A thousand yard stare.

Zoe turns to Gene, who has his knee on the back of BRIDGET
MCMILLAN (30s), tough, friendly, and generally
disinterested, tightening up her corset.

ZOE
(to Gene)
Hey, Gene. I'm not sure I'm actually
ready for this ... What if maybe I
don't have a fight scene, or, like,
any lines?

GENE
A princess without a fight scene?
What kind of sense would that make?

A beat.

ZOE
But what if someone gets hurt? Look,
Gene -

He claps her on the shoulder.

GENE
Hey. Call me "King Dad".

ZOE
(hesitating)
Hmmm, no -

GENE
Don't sweat the fight scene, or the
lines. Just have fun and leave the
rest to me. I'm the king, after all.
It's all on my shoulders. No one is
going to get hurt.

CUT TO:

BOOM: a BIRD'S EYE VIEW of the training field.

BOOM: a wider view, the park and the town.

BOOM: wider, the whole state.

BOOM: the whole US.

BOOM: Earth. Gradually a vast alien mothership moves into view, blocking our view of the planet.

TITLE: REN FAIRE VERSUS ALIENS!

EXT. REN FAIRE LANE - DAY

A few stalls have been set up to form a lane near the park service building, selling turkey legs, fry bread, ale and mead, and the pseudo-historical knickknacks ubiquitous to renaissance faires. It's very medieval-kitsch.

There's an archery course and a pillory nearby, and beyond is the field of battle, ready for jousting and armoured combat. A horse is tied to a hitching post. There are pennants everywhere.

Quinn rushes past, in full jester gear, very stressed, carrying bunting.

QUINN
(singing to himself)
*Well Dagonetto makes great haste /
He knows there be no time to waste -*

Zoe and Ben stride out into the lane.

Ben's phone BUZZES. Zoe glances over. "Kerri: Hey Ben! I'm worried. I heard on the news there's an unidentified fl..."

ZOE
Is that Kerri Santos again? You've gotta stop stringing her along.

QUINN
(arch)
Master Ben, what *is* that *magical device* -

BEN
(to Zoe)
I'm not stringing her along, I just don't want to be cruel.

ZOE
Literally just tell her you're gay.

BEN
No, I should let her down easy. I'll ghost her.

Gene comes over with a satchel. He confiscates Ben's phone and tosses it in before moving on to the other performers.

GENE

You know the rules. You get these back when we break for lunch. I've heard there's a deal on turkey legs today.

In the background, the TURKEY LEG VENDOR, a predictably greasy man in his 50s, picks up a turkey leg off the ground, dusts it off, tosses it back in the tray, and throws Gene a thumbs up.

TURKEY LEG VENDOR

(yelling)

Half off for cast and crew! \$8 each.

Zoe bites her nails.

BEN

(to Zoe)

Can you chill out a bit?

ZOE

This is a lot of pressure.

BEN

Being a princess? No it isn't. "Let them eat cake" or whatever.

Nearby, Bridget taps rapidly on her phone, hacking and slashing on a loud and sparkly mobile game.

BRIDGET

That was Marie Antoinette. She was decapitated.

Gene scoops up her phone and tosses it in his satchel.

GENE

Kids these days and their gadgets.

BRIDGET

I'm 38, dude.

BEN

(to Zoe)

Why did you sign up for this if you knew you'd hate it? I mean I know you're a huge fantasy nerd ...

Zoe looks up. Time slows down, and Ben's words fade out. In front of them is class stud DOUG KIMURA (18), clad in tight black leather armour, practicing archery. A real "vaseline on the lens" moment.

Zoe is instantly sweating. Doug takes a handful of water from a barrel and wets his hair, then shakes his head, sending a thousand little droplets sparkling through the early summer sunlight.

BEN (cont'd)
(pained)
Seriously? God, just talk to him.

He shoves her. Zoe he stumbles towards Teen Heartthrob Doug, who glances over, oblivious, and throws her a charming smile.

DOUG
Oh, hey, Zoe.

ZOE
(laughing)
Please, you can call me ... yup, Zoe.
Cause that's ...

An awkward pause. Ben looks on.

Doug knocks an arrow to his bow. He holds out his phone to Zoe.

DOUG
Would you mind?

INSERT: Doug's TikTok livestream.

DOUG (cont'd)
Hey Doug stans. I'm here at the
opening day of the Hillsborough Ren
Faire with my super good friends,
and, no cap, it's gonna be lit.

Confidently he twists and looses his arrow at the target.

Zoe zooms in.

ZOE (O.S.)
Wow, great shot.

It's hit the outer ring. It's an okay shot.

DOUG
(to camera)
Bullseye.

It's not a bullseye.

Doug gestures into the lens, giving his signature catchphrase:

DOUG (cont'd)

Doug.

Gene's hand reaches in and plucks Doug's phone away.

GENE

Don't you know those things will give you cancer?

The phone drops into a dark satchel, and for a moment, high above, we can see a kingly face looking in.

BACK TO: the Faire.

GENE (cont'd)

They're dangerous.

TWANG. Doug looses another arrow, which hits the frame and bounces back, spinning past his face.

DOUG

(unconcerned)

Are you ready for your big scene?

Zoe picks up the arrow. The head is snapped clean off. She hands it to him, leaning in to covertly sniff him.

ZOE

(very quietly)

I'm so nervous I think I'm going to throw up.

FLASH - nearby is CHARLIE VU (20s), a junior reporter for the local paper, holding a camera.

They blink, blinded.

CHARLIE

Whoops, I did not need flash for that. Hi, I'm Charlie Vu, Hillsborough Times, taking a few pictures.

Quinn races through, carrying more decorations.

QUINN

Master Doug, help me with this bunting!

DOUG

(to Zoe and Ben)

I'll see you dudes on the field of battle.

He wipes his sweaty forehead with a cloth, turns, and tosses the cloth aside, sauntering off. Zoe grabs the cloth out of midair.

ZOE
Do you ever get that thing where all
of your autonomic bodily functions
shut down for a hot minute?

She sniffs the cloth. Disgust and concern battle on Ben's face. FLASH.

CHARLIE (O.S.)
Dammit, how do I turn that off?

Quinn rushes past again, jingling frantically.

QUINN
(distantly)
'Sblood, 'tis almost upon us!

BEN
If that guy doesn't chill out and
drop character some time he's going
to give himself a heart attack.

ZOE
It's Quinn. He never, ever drops
character. We can't all be as
naturally cool as you, Ben.

BEN
Fine. I bet you he gets so stressed
that he breaks character and swears
today. If he does, you have to ask
Doug to the summer dance.

ZOE
And if he doesn't, you have to tell
Kerri Santos the truth.

BEN
Sure.

Zoe sighs warily.

ZOE
Okay, I guess.

GENE (O.S.)
Fifteen minutes, people! Get ready!

BEN
Come on, what's the worst that can
happen?

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLSBOROUGH - DAY (MONTAGE)

- A shadow falls over the Gardener's flowerpots.
- The Elderly Man looks up from bagging dog poop as the alien mothership descends through the clouds. He lets out a shriek: It's happening, at last.
- On another street a couple of TEENS are taking a video of some sweet skateboarding moves. One points to the sky, and the other whips her phone around to start filming the spacecraft.
- A MAN eating a burger walks serenely down the street. His phone buzzes and he pulls it out: "AMBER ALERT: UFO IN HILLSBOROUGH".

He yells, hurls his burger away, and sprints down the street. Nearby, others are receiving the same alert.

- A COUPLE is making out in a car nearby. As the reflection of the mothership passes over the window, the GUY looks up.

MAKING OUT GUY
Oh shit, aliens.

He goes back to making out.

- An electronics store. On the TV, an emergency announcement is coming live on the local TV station. The FEMALE ANCHOR and MALE ANCHOR address the camera nervously.

MALE ANCHOR
- following hundreds of reports from towns in the area of what some people are calling an ... alien spacecraft.

He gulps and wipes his brow.

FEMALE ANCHOR
There has been no official word from authorities yet on where this apparent vessel might have come from, or what its passengers may want here in Hillsborough, but numerous videos circulating ...

She pauses.

FEMALE ANCHOR
Sorry, the teleprompter's -

A SLAM from a door nearby in the studio, then the sound of a CAR ZOOMING OFF.

MALE ANCHOR
I can't do this. We're going to die.
We're all going to die.

He pulls off his lav mic and leaps over the desk towards a CAMERA OPERATOR.

MALE ANCHOR (cont'd)
Tony, I love you! Let's get the fuck
out of here.

He kisses the Operator passionately.

A small crowd gazes through the window at a display of TV monitors all showing the news station's live footage of the Anchor and the Camera Operator making out.

The footage cuts out and is replaced with a "Technical Difficulties" screen.

A beat, then the crowd goes wild. People run in all directions. A couple heave a trash can through the window and start grabbing monitors.

- A police cruiser pulls through the streets, a panicking voice blaring out of the PA system:

CRUISER ANNOUNCEMENT
For the love of Christ, everyone
remain calm!

- An ELDERLY COUPLE sitting in lawn chairs watches the craft without much interest.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Goddamn aliens.

INT. WINTER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

The alien craft zooms low over houses, and heads towards the woods nearby.

Mark Winter watches through the kitchen window, mouth hanging open.

EXT. PARK - DAY

The mothership descends into the trees. A BOOMING, VIBRATING SHOCKWAVE resounds, and a vast dome of wavering, purple energy engulfs a few miles of parkland.

EXT. HILLSBOROUGH STREET - DAY

As confusion reigns in Hillsborough, two sleek black cars and a humvee pull into town. All have government plates.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

SHERIFF SCHWARZ (50s) stands in front of the station drinking a cup of coffee as the convoy pulls up.

Military troops pour out of the humvee, securing the entrance to the police station, and FBI agents emerge from one black car, opening the doors of the other.

COMMANDER COOK, a special ops officer in her 50s, steps out. She's wearing sunglasses. She walks up to Schwarz and extends a hand. Military and government units swarm around them.

COMMANDER COOK
Sheriff Schwarz, I'm Commander
Katrina Cook. I'd like to be filled
in on everything.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ
Look, all I know is that about ten
minutes ago, a gigantic alien
spaceship -

COMMANDER COOK
Don't use that word, Sheriff.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ
(disbelieving)
"Alien"? What, you think this is the
Russians?

COMMANDER COOK
We don't know yet what we're dealing
with. But look around you, Sheriff.

Schwarz looks around at the officers and deputies running around. Cook whips off her sunglasses.

COMMANDER COOK (cont'd)
These boobs are on the edge of losing
it completely. For their sake, let's
not throw around provocative terms
just yet.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

The FBI agents are setting up new monitors and workstations
around the little office as Schwarz and Cook enter.

Papers are swept away, and laptops set up. Coffee cups are
brushed into the trash, and system monitors appear in their
place. An old box of doughnuts is tossed aside, replaced
with a box of fresher, more expensive doughnuts. They're in
this for the long haul.

Cook shouts out instructions while Schwarz tags along,
finishing his coffee.

COMMANDER COOK
Call up any video or still footage of
the object. We need to know what
we're dealing with.

DEPUTY BRUNELLE (30s) comes up with a fresh mug of coffee
for Schwarz, which he switches out with his empty mug.

Brunelle opens a video on his laptop - It's the
skateboarding teens' footage.

DEPUTY BRUNELLE
Look at this.

They gather around. In the video, one kid does a trick, then
they spin to watch as the craft zooms overhead.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ
My god. He just pulled off a perfect
laser flip.

COMMANDER COOK
Where did it go? We need to be on the
ground.

DEPUTY BRUNELLE
We think it touched down somewhere
near the state park.

She turns to the agents. It's go time.

COMMANDER COOK
I want a recon mission put together
immediately.

Brunelle skips to pictures of the forcefield.

DEPUTY BRUNELLE
A couple minutes ago a huge bubble
appeared over the park. I've never
seen anything like it.

COMMANDER COOK
(turning back)
A bubble?

DEPUTY BRUNELLE
We're guessing it might be a
forcefield of some kind.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ
And the ... thing is inside.

COMMANDER COOK
(frustrated)
Damn it. Then it's too late, they've
already sealed themselves off. There
must be someone inside, but who?

Frustration. Brunelle turns to his desk, then spots
something. His eyes widen.

He turns back to Cook and Schwarz, lifting up a flyer. Cook
and Schwarz lean in to get a closer look: "Hear ye, hear ye!
RENAISSANCE FAIRE in Hillsborough State Park, opens this
Saturday!" Beneath the words is a caricature of a jovial
armoured king, obviously Gene, smiling broadly and raising a
tankard.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. PARK FIELD - DAY

Gene, weary, lifts a massive plastic cup of iced coffee to
his mouth.

One of the phones in Gene's satchel starts to VIBRATE. More
and more join in. One plays the GAME OF THRONES THEME.

Gene glances down.

GENE
That's a lot of Snapchats.

Bridget looks up at the ominous purple forcefield overhead.

BRIDGET
Weird weather today, huh?

GENE
Damn it, who's going to joust with me
if Mikayla doesn't show up? Where the
hell is she?

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLSBOROUGH PARK ENTRANCE - DAY

Several cars have pulled up on the verge. Would-be Ren Faire attendees are gathered around the shimmering forcefield.

One GUY WITH A PLASTIC ROMAN HELMET calls out.

ROMAN HELMET
Hey! Are you guys open? Hello?

MIKAYLA (O.S.)
Move aside!

Along the path comes an armoured knight on horseback -
MIKAYLA (30s), late for the Faire. The crowd parts and
watches her impressive approach.

She trots up to the entrance, lowers her lance, and touches
the metal point to the forcefield. A RESOUNDING BOOM echoes
through the trees.

MIKAYLA
Ooooooooooooo I am so hungover.

EXT. REN FAIRE LANE - DAY

Benson and Dziedzic are eating turkey legs. Dziedzic has a
temporary tattoo of a battleaxe on his forearm.

OFFICER DZIEDZIC
I'm telling you, you're not supposed
to use a paper towel, you've just got
to grab it and tear out a big bite.

The BOOM echoes distantly. Benson looks around at the woods.

OFFICER BENSON
Did you hear that?

OFFICER DZIEDZIC
Hear what?

OFFICER BENSON
Not sure. Maybe we should go check
the cruiser.

They head towards the parking lot.

From the trees nearby, a faint CLICKING: Something is
watching them.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Dziedzic is still munching his way through the turkey leg as
they approach the cruiser.

OFFICER BENSON
You owe me sixteen bucks, by the way.

The car radio is going crazy.

DEPUTY BRUNELLE (V.O.)
Car 9! Come in, Car 9!

Benson rushes up and grabs the transponder.

OFFICER BENSON
This is Benson!

DEPUTY BRUNELLE (V.O.)
Urgent, we have a 10-70 at your
location, repeat, a 10-70 at your
location!

Benson thinks for a moment.

BENSON
Zoo animals?

DEPUTY BRUNELLE (V.O.)
Aliens!

Benson and Dziedzic turn to each other.

A FOOTFALL in the gravel nearby. Benson and Dziedzic turn
slowly.

Both grab at their guns. A FLASH OF LIGHT! Two piles of ash
and bones crumble to the ground. Two badges and two guns
fall on top, followed by two turkey legs.

DEPUTY BRUNELLE (V.O.) (cont'd)
Benson, do you copy? Benson!

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Brunelle looks up from the transponder.

DEPUTY BRUNELLE
We lost them.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ
Damn it!

COMMANDER COOK
Alright. Call in the artillery.

Schwarz and Brunelle exchange a look.

EXT. PARK PORTAPOTTIES - DAY

Ben finishes peeing and starts buttoning himself up.

BEN
All these fucking buttons.

He hears strange FOOTSTEPS and weird HEAVY BREATHING nearby. Looking through the vent holes in the portapotty, he can make out a shape moving around.

He finishes buttoning up and steps out.

BEN (cont'd)
Hello? Is anyone there?

Quiet CLICKING. Someone, or something, is watching Ben around the side of the portapotties. Not noticing, Ben shrugs and wanders back towards the Faire.

BEN (cont'd)
Probably just perverts again.

EXT. HILLSBOROUGH STREET - DAY

A massive military tank rolls through the streets, rounding a corner and crushing a flowerpot.

The Elderly Couple is still sitting in front of their house, listening to the BEACH BOYS on a record player.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Shhhh!

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

An FBI AGENT comes up to Cook.

FBI AGENT
Rattlesnake is on the ground, ma'am.

COMMANDER COOK
Call them up on the monitor.

The Agent taps a few keys, and a live feed of the TANK OPERATOR comes up on the screen, chewing an enormous amount of gum.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ
Woah.

TANK OPERATOR
Reporting in, ma'am!

COMMANDER COOK
Get in position, Rattlesnake.

He blows a massive bubble.

TANK OPERATOR
Roger. Heading to Hillsborough State Park.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Whistling, Ben wanders through the parking lot. He spots the pile of bones and ash and stops. FOOTSTEPS. Something is following him.

BEN
Huh, that's new.

He keeps going. The FOOTSTEPS get closer. At last he registers them and slowly turns around.

A chitinous, insectoid ALIEN, five or six feet tall, with a bizarre gun-like weapon and a shimmering, purplish head shield looks back at him. Its shiny eyes blink out of sync.

A beat as they stare at each other. Ben shakes his head.

BEN (cont'd)
Man, you are at the wrong Faire.

He walks off, laughing to himself.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

A bike bell RINGS. The military and FBI guards stand at alert. Mark Winter tears up on a BMX, out of breath.

The FBI Agent blocks his path.

FBI AGENT
Sir, this is a special operation. I
cannot let you in there.

Mark charges past.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The live feed of the tank is still up on the screen.

TANK OPERATOR
Rattlesnake is in position,
Commander. Do I take the shot?

Before Cook can answer, Mark bursts into the control centre, panting heavily, the FBI Agent hot on his heels.

MARK WINTER
Please! Whatever you're doing, be
careful!

FBI AGENT
Sorry, ma'am -

MARK WINTER
My daughter's in there.

COMMANDER COOK
Your daughter?

MARK WINTER
Yes. She's part of the Ren Faire. She
signed up after her friend joined,
and then she got cast as the
princess, which is actually kind of a
huge deal, because she decided not to
go to college, and I want to be cool
about that, but -

COMMANDER COOK
(impatiently)
Get to the point.

MARK WINTER

Oh right, of course. I'm so bad at speaking frankly with her, but honestly I've been worried she's not doing anything with her life, you know?

SHERIFF SCHWARZ

Mark, bullet points, please.

MARK WINTER

You're right. I think her fear of attention makes her way too self-effacing, and then she falls beneath the radar. Is it wrong of me to worry that without some kind of push, she'll just be avoiding commitment forever? She's clearly clinically afraid of responsibility -

The military squad rolls their eyes.

EXT. REN FAIRE LANE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Everyone's milling around. Quinn plays with his bells. Gene has a massive crown on his head.

GENE

8:59 everyone! One minute!

Leaves CRUNCH in the bushes. Something is sneaking up on Quinn. Closer, closer, until at last it leaps out -

BEN

Boo!

Quinn clutches his chest.

QUINN

Gadzooks! Master Benjamin!

BEN

Really, nothing?

GENE

(calling out)

Here they come, everyone! We've worked really hard for this. This is the first Renaissance Faire Hillsborough's had in twenty years, and you're the inaugural cast. This is huge.

Ben turns to Zoe.

BEN
Hey, did you see that alien costume
guy? Actually pretty cool.

ZOE
(to herself)
I can't do this. I can't.

BEN
What?

She begins to make her way towards Gene.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

MARK WINTER
- so taking this Ren Faire
opportunity felt like a real step
towards growth, actually putting
herself in a position of
responsibility, *leadership* even, and
I wish I were better at telling her
how proud I am -

The Tank Operator peers into the screen, trying to make out
what's going on.

TANK OPERATOR
Commander, should I take the shot?

COMMANDER COOK
Affirmative.

MARK WINTER
No, wait!

EXT. REN FAIRE LANE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

GENE
(monologuing)
We're all in this together, and I
want you to know I would do anything
for you. I feel almost like a father
to you all.

BRIDGET
I'm still 38.

Zoe reaches Gene and touches his shoulder.

ZOE

Uhhh Gene? I might actually have to,
uh ...

GENE

(getting into it)

This is our glory day! This is the
day we make our children proud! This
is the day our destinies are truly
forged!

QUINN

Great monologuing, your majesty.

ZOE

I'm going to have to go -

There's a enormous BOOM and metallic echoing.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Silence in the HQ. Mark looks aghast at the screen. A beat,
then -

TANK OPERATOR

Commander, it didn't -

The feed cuts to static.

EXT. REN FAIRE LANE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The cast gathers around Gene, looking out into the woods.

GENE

That was unusual.

QUINN

(pointing)

Look, everyone! Customers!

A SHARP BUZZING SOUND. From the distant treeline comes a
hovering pod, all shiny metal and glowing lights, nine feet
long.

It stops some fifty feet away, and a figure begins to
emerge.

QUINN (cont'd)

Welcome to the Hillsborough
Renaissance F- ...

An ALIEN stares at them. They look at it. It looks back. As one, the reenactors draw their weapons.

Immediately, the Alien levels its blaster and starts shooting at them. The cast scatters. Glowing projectiles fly around them, vaporising bits of stall and chunks of earth.

The Turkey Leg Vendor stands up behind his stall.

TURKEY LEG VENDOR

Hey -

He is instantly blasted into a pile of ash and turkey bones.

EXT. PARK FIELD - DAY

The cast regroups on the other side of the park services building, crouching low.

BRIDGET

What is happening?!

DOUG

This doesn't seem very historically accurate.

Quinn is hyperventilating fiercely, bells jangling with every breath.

QUINN

(panicking)

God's wounds, whence come these hellbeasts?

BEN

(disappointed)

Oh, come on.

GENE

Quiet, everyone!

He peers around the corner. The alien pod emerges, then zooms down the field.

Gene watches in horror as the Alien gets out and starts setting up some kind of antenna.

GENE (cont'd)

Listen, team. I don't know what that thing wants, but I guarantee it's nothing good. All I know is that when I hired you, I made a vow that I would keep you safe.

ZOE
What are you -

DOUG
He's monologuing.

BRIDGET
Uh oh.

GENE
We've fought too long, sacrificed too much. This was our glory day. Being king means taking responsibility, and I'll be damned if I let some alien ruin this Ren Faire. Quinn! Helm!

Quinn catches the crown as Gene flings it aside. He places a massive helmet on Gene's head. Gene leaps up.

GENE (cont'd)
Cover me!

BEN
With what?

Gene runs to his horse, tethered to a nearby post. Unhitching it, he mounts and grabs his lance. The others run out from behind the building to watch.

GENE
For honour!

He charges. Epic slow motion. INTENSE MEDIEVAL METAL MUSIC starts playing. Hooves biting the earth. Lance couched. Gene's face locked in a grimace of rage.

The Alien looks up. The MUSIC builds. The horse's mane flies in the wind.

An alarm BEEPS in the the pod, and BOOM: The mothership rises from behind the trees, impossibly vast.

With a mighty ROAR light engulfs Gene and the horse.

INSERT: A BURST OF BLOWN OUT SOUND on Doug's TikTok live feed, still going this whole time, cuts out. The feed flashes white and ends.

After the briefest of beats, a pile of burning bones scatters across the field. The mothership settles back behind the trees.

A long pause. Charlie raises her camera to take a picture.

Everyone else dashes for the park services building. Quinn drops to his knees.

QUINN
Nooooooooooooo!

Zoe grabs him, and they follow the others.

INT. PARK SERVICE BUILDING - DAY

The cast huddles inside, peering out the grimy windows.

BEN
That guy had all our phones.

Quinn weeps on the floor.

QUINN
Oh flower of pryncedom, gone, gone
from this world too soon. Alack!

Through his tears, he looks down at the crown still clutched in his hands. Choking back sobs, he looks up.

QUINN (cont'd)
Do you know what this means?

BEN
Earth is doomed?

BRIDGET
We're probably not getting paid?

Quinn clambers to his feet. He holds out the crown towards Zoe.

QUINN
You're in charge now.

Her eyes open wide in horror.

ZOE
What.

He places the crown on her head.

QUINN
The king is dead. Long live the
queen.

She looks around. Everyone is watching her.

Gulp.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

The monitor shows static. Everyone stares with bated breath.

COMMANDER COOK
Rattlesnake? Come in, Rattlesnake!

The feed flashes back on.

TANK OPERATOR
Nothing, commander! Not even a dent.

Mark takes a huge breath.

TANK OPERATOR (cont'd)
But there's one more thing. A couple minutes after impact, the dome wavered, like it cut out for a split second.

MARK WINTER
(to Commander Cook)
Please, don't do anything rash. I know the folks in there. They're super weird, but they're good people.

Cook sizes him up. She turns to the monitor.

COMMANDER COOK
(to the Tank Operator)
Head back to base, Rattlesnake.

TANK OPERATOR
Roger that.

COMMANDER COOK
(to Mark)
I'm going to get your daughter out of there, Mr. Winter. You have my word.

There's a BANGING sound from the tank feed.

TANK OPERATOR
Wait a moment - Something's out there.

Cook rushes back to the monitor.

COMMANDER COOK
Rattlesnake, what is it? Come in!

INT. TANK - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Rhythmic BANGING on the side of the tank.

TANK OPERATOR
(to himself)
What on earth ...

He grabs a gun and makes his way up to the hatch.

EXT. FIELD OUTSIDE HILLSBOROUGH - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The tank is parked in a field near the road to the park. Not far off, the forcefield shimmers.

The hatch bangs open, and the Tank Operator peers out, gun at the ready.

Next to the tank is a fully armoured mounted knight.

A beat.

TANK OPERATOR
Can I help you?

MIKAYLA
Take me to your leader.

INT. PARK SERVICE BUILDING - DAY

The situation in the park service building is grim. Harrowed, shellshocked expressions.

Charlie sits unnoticed near the door, panting. She scrolls through the photos on her camera. She can't believe her luck - Aliens, captured on film for the first time.

But the pictures are blurry and distant.

CHARLIE
(to herself)
Damn, too blurry.

QUINN
O accursèd day! No court jester ought
lose his liege lord after so foul a
fashion, smote to smithereens by a
fell hellfiend.

BEN
He's still really on top of that
alliteration.

Bridget finishes zipping up her tracksuit. She sighs heavily, sorrowfully.

BRIDGET

What a loss. I put eighty one hours into Genshin Impact on that phone. That's three hundred and sixty six dollars in microtransactions I'll never get back.

DOUG

It's cross saved on the cloud.

BRIDGET

Okay cool.

ZOE

(anxiously)

This is fine. People know we're here, right? All we have to do is wait.

Quinn perks up. He rushes over to her, and crouches at her feet, cracking his knuckles.

QUINN

What should we do, my queen?

ZOE

I don't know. I don't know!

QUINN

(to Zoe)

Your word is my command! Order me, sire, I beg!

Concerned, Bridget reaches out to him.

BRIDGET

Quinn -

QUINN

(recoiling)

Dagonetto Hop-Frog! Don't touch me!

BEN

(quietly, to Zoe)

The bet still stands, by the way.

DOUG

What about me, Zoe? Is there anything I can do for you?

Ben catches her eye.

BRIDGET
(to Zoe)
Hey, what should we do if we need
to -

ZOE
Please, stop asking me things! Just
do what you think is right, I don't
know.

BRIDGET
... pee?

A pause.

ZOE
Wait, where's the photographer?

They look around. Charlie is gone.

QUINN
Worry not, majesty, I shall discover
her!

ZOE
Quinn -

QUINN
(stage whispering)
Quiet as a shadow.

Bells JANGLING, he darts out the door. Out the window the
others see him dash covertly into the field.

ZOE
He'll be fine, right?

Quinn creeps up to Gene's remains and gingerly picks up his
charred skull and regards it.

DOUG
He's doing that Shakespeare thing.

Quinn shrieks at the top of his lungs and charges into the
woods.

BRIDGET
He'll be fine.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Agents and officers hustle through the station. Phones RING.
A map lies open, a big circle drawn in pen.

MARK WINTER
(pointing)
This is the main field, where they
were setting up the Ren Faire.

Sheriff Schwarz drains his coffee, then nods sharply to
Deputy Brunelle, who swiftly switches it out for a fresh
mug.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ
Two of our officers were stationed in
there, but we haven't been able to
reach them in nearly an hour.

COMMANDER COOK
(to the room)
Quiet, please!

The HUBBUB dies down.

COMMANDER COOK (cont'd)
Mr. Winter, you've tried calling -

A loud CLANKING from outside.

FBI AGENT
Hey, you can't just -

Mikayla, still fully armoured, storms into the command
centre.

COMMANDER COOK
Wow, there is absolutely no security
in here.

MIKAYLA
Commander Cook?

With the limited visibility of her visor, she stumbles
around, knocking over computer screens and stacks of
documents.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ
Hey! You can't come into a police
station dressed like that!

MARK WINTER
Is it illegal?

A beat.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ
I'm not sure.

Brunelle pulls a book from a shelf and thumbs through it, studying.

COMMANDER COOK
I'm Cook. What do you have for me?

MIKAYLA
Anything you need to know about the
Ren Faire, I can tell you. I was
supposed to be in there.

They regard the fully armoured figure: *No shit.*

Cook turns to Deputy Brunelle.

COMMANDER COOK
Deputy ...

DEPUTY BRUNELLE
(dropping the book)
Brunelle, ma'am.

COMMANDER COOK
Deputy Brunelle, dis-armour this
knight.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Charlie creeps through the undergrowth.

A CRACKING SOUND ahead. She ducks to the ground and peers up. In a clearing ahead, two aliens are planting another antenna in the ground.

Once it's set, the beacon begins pulsing the same purplish colour as the shield dome.

Charlie leans forward and raises her camera to take a picture. FLASH. The aliens wheel around.

CHARLIE
Oh shit.

Behind her, another alien figure looms.

EXT. HILLSBOROUGH PARK ENTRANCE - DAY

Quinn, panting slightly, laughing nervously, trots through the woods.

QUINN
(a cheerful tune)
*Well Dagonetto is my name /
And making merry is my game! /
In this aside, I do confide /
That I am feeling terrified -*

He spots the shimmering barrier.

QUINN (cont'd)
Almighty Neptune.

He looks at it for a second, then picks up an empty soda can and throws it.

ZAP - the can bounces back.

He picks it up and throws it again. This time he catches it. He starts getting into a rhythm, throwing and catching, and he smiles nervously.

A CRACK from the woods nearby.

QUINN (cont'd)
Gadzooks!

He scurries back up the road.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

QUINN
(faster, more
terrified)
*Well Dagonetto, that is me /
And for my life I have to flee. /
I wish instead I were in bed /
But I'm afraid I'll soon be -*

Something catches his ear, and he jumps - RADIO CHATTER.

He turns and begins walking cautiously towards the police cruiser.

RADIO DISPATCH (V.O.)
Car 4, head to Myers Road and keep an
eye on that dome - 10-4.

Quinn reaches the ashes and bones of the two police officers. He bends down and pulls out a gun. His bells JANGLE.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Brunelle is with the DISPATCH OFFICER. Intense murmurs pass between them.

DEPUTY BRUNELLE
(calling out)
Sheriff! Commander! We might have
found something.

Cook, Schwarz, Mikayla, and Mark all gather around. Schwarz grabs the transponder. There's a CLICKING sound.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ
Car 9, come in! Benson?
(pause)
Who's there?

STATIC. Then:

QUINN (V.O.)
Uhhh ... good morrow?

INT. PARK SERVICE BUILDING - DAY

Doug hammers boards over a window.

Bridget slips in through the door, carrying a big tray.

BRIDGET
Good news, everyone! Turkey legs for
all. Also good news, I didn't see any
human remains that looked like Quinn.
Less great news, there were a lot of
human remains. Turkey guy, fake
tattoo lady, the dude with the
snakes, they're all dead.

She sets it down on a table.

BRIDGET (cont'd)
I think a little bit of turkey guy's
ashes fell in here, but it's probably
fine.

She picks up a turkey leg and takes a bite.

BRIDGET (cont'd)
Mmmmm ... awful.

Doug brushes his hands. Fortifications complete.

DOUG
(satisfied)
Doug.

ZOE
Great job.

DOUG
Maybe I was a carpenter in a past
life.

ZOE
(laughing)
Yeah, like Jesus maybe.

No one responds.

ZOE (cont'd)
(trailing off)
Cause he had those great ... abs.

Ben stands by Zoe with a javelin.

BEN
(quietly)
I'm sure you can't wait to lose this
bet so you have an excuse to smooch
Doug.

ZOE
The bet is annulled if Quinn dies.

Too morbid.

ZOE (cont'd)
Knock on wood -

The door bursts open and Quinn stumbles in, out of breath,
brandishing the gun.

QUINN
Majesty!

He drops to one knee. Bridget swiftly confiscates the gun.

QUINN (cont'd)
My queen, a -
(thinking hard)
- a raven - from the outside world -
but, those, uhhh, creatures,
everywhere!

A beat.

BRIDGET

What?

Frustrated, Quinn tries to mime the transponder.

QUINN

A raven, a message -

BEN

Quinn, it's okay if you have to break character and just totally let loose what's on your mind.

Quinn turns to him, a fleck of madness in his eye.

QUINN

Dagonetto says: Ne'er, but ne'er,
break thine character.

He beckons Zoe urgently.

QUINN (cont'd)

For the queen's eyes.

ZOE

Quinn, I'm not a queen -

He bolts back out the door.

ZOE (cont'd)

Damn it.

Zoe grabs a spear and heads towards the door.

BEN

I'm coming with you.

ZOE

Fine. Bridget, you're in charge, I guess. Don't let anything happen to Doug.

Quinn, Ben, and Zoe leave. Bridget and Doug look at each other for a moment.

DOUG

I can take care of mys-

A plank falls off the window, narrowly missing him.

EXT. REN FAIRE LANE - DAY

The stalls are smashed up and smoldering. Zoe, Ben, and Quinn sneak down the path.

QUINN
(humming)
Well Dagonetto I am called -

A pod buzzes about the field not far off. They duck behind a stall.

QUINN (cont'd)
(aside)
Fiends! Would that I could drive ye
back to the bowels of Hades myself.

Another pod heads into the woods in front, clearing their way. Quinn makes a break for it, and the other two follow.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Stealthily, they creep into the parking lot. Quinn points to the cruiser.

QUINN
The raven, highness! Our channel to
the world beyond the wall.

The radio CHATTERS away.

ZOE
Ohhh okay, I get it now.

Quinn grabs the transponder.

QUINN
Brave Commander, canst hear me? Over.

CRACKLE.

COMMANDER COOK (V.O.)
Dagonetto Hop-Frog, I'm receiving you
loud and clear.

QUINN
I have brought unto thee our
sovereign queen. I present her now.
Over.

He beckons Zoe in and hands her the transponder.

COMMANDER COOK (V.O.)
Sounds good.

ZOE
Hi, who is this?

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Schwarz and Brunelle stand nearby as Cook talks into the radio.

COMMANDER COOK
Oh, thank Christ you don't all talk like that - My name is Katrina Cook, I'm the commander of the special forces in Hillsborough. You are the ... queen?

INTERCUT ZOE/COMMANDER COOK

Zoe looks around. Quinn nods enthusiastically. Ben gives her a thumbs up.

ZOE
I guess?

COMMANDER COOK
Then I'll be communicating with you while we figure this situation out. Listen, the jester told me about your father. I'm sorry.

ZOE
Oh, he wasn't my real father. He just played him in the faire.

COMMANDER COOK
Never mind, then.

Mark Winter is nearby. He rushes up to the radio. Mikayla follows him.

MARK WINTER
Is that Zoe?

ZOE
Dad?

MARK WINTER
How you holding up, cub?

ZOE
Dad -

There's a CRASH from the woods not too far off, and the HUMMING of an alien pod.

BEN
(to Zoe)
We can't stay here.

COMMANDER COOK
Zoe, does anyone there have a cell phone?

ZOE
No, they all got destroyed. This is our only form of communication.

COMMANDER COOK
We need to keep this channel open.

ZOE
(to Ben and Quinn)
Is there a way we could get this car back to the park service building?

BEN
We can't start it without attracting attention, and there's no way we'll be able to push it up through the field without being spotted.

Mikayla jumps in.

MIKAYLA
Zoe, it's Mikayla. Sorry I was late this morning. I was really hungover.

ZOE
I assumed.

BEN
We assumed.

MIKAYLA
There's a back road up to the park service building. We used it to load in the gear last night.

Zoe stands up and looks around.

MIKAYLA (cont'd)
It goes off the far corner of the parking lot. There's a sign that says -

Zoe spots it.

ZOE
"Staff only", got it.

COMMANDER COOK
You're doing a great job, Zoe.

ZOE
(dismissive)
If staying alive counts.

MARK WINTER
Zoe! I just wanted to say -

He searches for the right words, but finally, lamely -

MARK WINTER (cont'd)
If you see any aliens, you just tell
them you need some space.

A pause. The others look at him.

ZOE
Okay, dad.

Cook looks over the aerial photographs, following the road.

COMMANDER COOK
Looks like that road should lead you
right there. Turn off the radio, then
check in once you've made it.

ZOE
Got it.

She shuts off the radio.

Quinn hunts around in the pile of ashes, then holds up the
key. Zoe takes it, puts the car in neutral. They take a deep
breath and start pushing the car towards the service road.

EXT. PARK SERVICE ROAD - DAY

A rough track through the woods. They struggle, sweating,
pushing the car as fast as they can.

ZOE
We should have brought more people.

BEN
Maybe if someone had just been
themselves instead of playing
medieval make believe we'd have known
it was a car and not a raven.

A BUZZING sound from down the road behind them.

ZOE
(whispering)
Come on!

They push harder.

EXT. PARK FIELD - DAY

They reach the edge of the woods. It's only a hundred yards to the garage of the park service building, but it's across open field.

They pause.

QUINN
(bitterly)
Devils.

There are half a dozen pods buzzing around the field before them. No way through.

ZOE
We can push it off into the woods
here -

BUZZING grows louder behind them down the road. The other pod is catching up.

BEN
There's no time.

There's a glint in his eye. Zoe catches his hand.

ZOE
Don't do anything stupid.

BEN
Sorry, Zoe.

He starts running into the open field.

BEN (cont'd)
(shouting)
Hey, assholes!

The pods spin to face him. A beat, then they bear down, converging on his location.

QUINN
Sir B-

Quinn starts forward, distraught. Zoe claps a hand over his mouth.

Out in the field Ben wheels away and vanishes into the woods. The pods race after him into the trees.

Zoe heaves the cruiser forward.

QUINN (cont'd)
Benjamin, he's -

ZOE
Stupid. He should have kept his head down.

QUINN
Oh, why, why, cruel gods?

Pushing the car at the driver's side door, Quinn beats the steering wheel tearfully.

ZOE
Jesus, Quinn. Drop the shtick.

QUINN
Must it always be the young and beautiful that -

He hits the wrong part. The SIREN goes off, and LIGHTS flash.

Another pod rounds the building.

QUINN (cont'd)
God's blood, what did I -

He turns it off, but too late. The pod is approaching.

ZOE
Push!

Quinn heaves the car closer to the garage door, but there's no time. Cursing, Zoe grabs her spear from the back seat.

The pod races forward, weapons ports glowing. Zoe hurls the spear with all her might - It flies true, but bounces off some invisible shield before hitting the craft.

ZOE (cont'd)
Shit.

She leaps aside, barely dodging a blast from the alien weapon.

Bridget and Doug rush out of the park service building. Bridget brandishes an axe and shield.

Doug takes aim with his bow and looses an arrow, but it misses.

The pod wheels around for another pass. Zoe scrambles to her feet and charges back toward the building.

Doug loses another arrow, but it bounces off the shield.

A near miss from the pod sends Zoe flying. It bears down upon her.

Doug reaches for his last piece of ammunition, only to pull out the broken, headless arrow.

He knocks, draws, takes aim, and, as the pod is about to obliterate Zoe, looses.

The arrow goes straight into the weapons port. There's a SCREECH and THUMP from the pod, and smoke starts pouring out.

They watch in astonishment as the pod veers, out of control. It crashes past Doug, hurling him into the wall, then runs smack into a nearby tree and crumples to the ground.

Zoe runs to Doug. He holds out his hand to her.

DOUG
(blearily)
Did - did we do good?

Zoe strokes his face.

Bullseye. Z0E

DOUG
Zoe, before I die - tell my ... tell
my TikTok followers -

He slumps down dramatically and is motionless. After a moment, he starts snoring.

Bridget stands nearby.

BRIDGET
He might have a concussion, so we
probably shouldn't let him sleep.

A METALLIC SCRAPING - they look over at the pod as an ALIEN
POD PILOT ejects itself and stiffly stands upright,
extending its weapon.

They draw back. The Alien CLICKS threateningly at them, preparing to fire. Then a tree branch drops from above, squarely knocking it unconscious.

ZOE
(quietly)
Thanks, tree.

INT. ALIEN MOTHERSHIP - BRIDGE - DAY

A weird alien symbol flashes on a console. The surfaces are strangely slick. An ALIEN HAND reaches out to touch a button. We don't see its face.

ALIEN PILOT (O.S.)
(subtitles)
Pod 9, Captain!

The mothership bulkheads are masses of organic-looking ridges. An eerie BREATHING SOUND rasps.

The ALIEN CAPTAIN taps its fingers.

ALIEN CAPTAIN
(subtitles)
Continue with the plan ... for now.

INT. PARK SERVICE BUILDING - DAY

They've hauled in the pillory, an absolute photo-op staple of any self-respecting ren faire. Bridget holds the unconscious Alien in place and locks it tight.

BRIDGET
Well, shit.

There's a glowing forcefield around the Alien's head. She taps it with a spoon. It bounces off.

BRIDGET (cont'd)
It's the same colour as the sky. Must
be some kind of forcefield.

Zoe lowers Doug onto a pile of costumes. She takes Doug's sweaty handkerchief from her pocket and dabs his face tenderly, allowing herself a brief, covert sniff before pocketing it again.

BRIDGET (cont'd)
(to Zoe)
You're like a real hero.

Zoe winces and dismisses the compliment.

BRIDGET (cont'd)
So ... you jack'd a police cruiser?

A beat. Zoe tosses the broken, sparking alien gun down on the table beside the police pistol.

ZOE
Yes.

INT. PARK SERVICE GARAGE - DAY

Quinn is slumped against the cruiser, muttering to himself.

QUINN
Foolsome man! Thou bull's pizzle,
thou boorish toad. I am sick when I
do look on thee!

He looks up at himself in the side view mirror.

QUINN (cont'd)
Didst thou really think that in these
jester's vestments thou couldst
escape thyself? Thy step mother was
right, thou shouldst just *grow up* -

The door opens and Zoe enters. Startled, Quinn tries to play it cool.

QUINN (cont'd)
(humming)
Well Dagonetto something something -

ZOE
No word on the radio?

Quinn gestures to the transponder.

QUINN
The ... the raven is dead, your
majesty.

ZOE
Call me Zoe, Quinn.

QUINN
Dagonetto, your grace -

ZOE
Please.

Highness - QUINN

Quinn. ZOE

My queen - QUINN

Quinn! ZOE

I cannot. QUINN

Zoe looks at him.

Alright. ZOE

A beat.

Forgive me, my queen. QUINN

She pats him on the shoulder.

I'm honestly impressed at your commitment. ZOE

(quietly)
Better to be a hero in fantasy than a failure in reality. QUINN

Too real. He avoids her eye.

A jester, a queen, and a stolen police car. We'll laugh about this one day ... ZOE

They don't laugh.

INT. PARK SERVICE BUILDING - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Doug is still out. Bridget kneels down next to him and looks into his unconscious face.

(to herself)
So pretty. BRIDGET

She starts slapping him.

BRIDGET (cont'd)
Wake! Up! Doug! Wake! Up! Doug!

He opens his eyes groggily and looks straight into the face of the Alien captive, who's also just waking up.

He screams.

ALIEN CAPTIVE
(subtitles)
[Alien shrieks]

INT. PARK SERVICE GARAGE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

ZOE
(finishing her
thought)
... Or we'll all be dead.

They hear the SCREAMS from the other room.

BRIDGET (O.S.)
Zoe!

Zoe rushes for the door.

INT. PARK SERVICE BUILDING - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Bridget and Doug are standing around the Alien, which spits and jabbers at them. Zoe and Quinn join them.

ZOE
(to the Alien Captive)
Quiet! Quiet! Can you understand us?

It makes a few more unintelligible noises.

BRIDGET
Shall we put it out of our misery?

She brandishes the gun.

QUINN
Good queen! If I may have your leave.

Behind them, the Alien lowers its head and taps its suit, initiating some sort of sequence. A glowing panel on its chest starts pulsing.

QUINN (cont'd)
'Twould be poor form, i' faith, to
inflict such sport on a prisoner, be
he of our world or nay.

The Alien is silent. The panel pulses faster.

QUINN (cont'd)
(building)
We are not monsters, nor petty
children! We can finally show those
who'd doubt us that we are heroes
indeed, brave and wise. And It may be
that he provide some use for us,
before the game is done. Aye, though
we conceive him not, yet still I note
the spark of intelligence not far
removed from -

The panel lets out a PING, and gives a message:

PANEL (V.O.)
Translator calibrated.

They all turn to look. Slowly, the Alien begins to speak.

ALIEN CAPTIVE
O ye brigands, wherefore have ye
ensnarèd me?

A beat.

BRIDGET
You have got to be -

QUINN
(quickly)
I shall sit quietly in the corner.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Commander Cook paces, frustrated.

FBI AGENT
The drones are picking up those
little pods all over the place.
Almost looks like they're searching
for something.

Cook slams her hand down on the table. Deputy Brunelle saves
the doughnuts as they topple off the edge.

COMMANDER COOK

Damn it! We still don't know why the shield dropped out, but now it's getting stronger.

Schwarz comes over, drinking his coffee.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ

Still no response from the medieval guys.

DEPUTY BRUNELLE

I think they're Renaissance guys, Sheriff.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ

(shrugging)

I went to the one in Ashville a couple years ago and there was a caveman and a steampunk, so I honestly have no idea.

COMMANDER COOK

Sheriff, we're running out of time. If we don't get in there soon, I wouldn't give those poor reenactors a snowball's chance in -

Schwarz gestures urgently to Mark, who's sitting at an unused desk nearby, staring off into space.

MARK WINTER

Huh?

Sheriff Schwarz coughs.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ

How are you holding up, Mark?

He drains the last of his mug. Brunelle instantly appears with a fresh mug, and Schwarz swaps it out without even looking.

MARK WINTER

Me? I'm fine.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ

You want some coffee? The Deputy will get you some.

Hearing this, Brunelle bolts, stumbling, for the coffee maker.

MARK WINTER

No, I'm okay. I just - What's wrong with me, Steve? It's my fault Zoe can't accept praise. I've had years to tell her I'm proud of her. Now she's in danger and I still can't do it. All I can say is hilarious puns.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ

Hey, it's not easy being a dad. Come here, big guy.

Mark gets up and hugs him. He sniffles a little.

MARK WINTER

It's always been easier to talk to animals. And you, for some reason.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ

I've just got one of those faces. Don't you worry, Mark. Zoe's definitely, definitely going to be fine.

MARK WINTER

Thanks, Sheriff.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ

I mean that.

Over Mark's shoulder he makes eye contact with Brunelle, who gives him a questioning thumbs up. Schwarz shrugs, "I have no idea."

The FBI Agent returns and glances at the hugging men.

FBI AGENT

Hey guys, we're getting pizza. Any requests?

DEPUTY BRUNELLE

Ooh, Hawai'ian, please.

Schwarz and Mark are still hugging it out.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ

Pepperoni.

MARK WINTER

(sniffing)

Quattro formaggi.

INT. PARK SERVICE BUILDING - DAY

Zoe faces off with the pilloried Alien.

ZOE

Can you understand me?

ALIEN CAPTIVE

Forsooth I can. Our technology is beyond compare - scoff - "your majesty".

BRIDGET

Did you just say "scoff"?

ALIEN CAPTIVE

Our technology is beyond compare.

ZOE

Why did you come here?

ALIEN CAPTAIN

Verily I'll tell thee plain, softling. Your sphere is ripe and fruitful, and will new bounty provide for our encrowded people.

BRIDGET

Hey bro, it's not cool to annex someone's homeland and take their natural resources.

ALIEN CAPTAIN

Thou canst not gainsay us. Soon shall the master plan be complete.

ZOE

What is the master plan?

ALIEN CAPTIVE

Thou canst not trick me. Once the plan is complete, then shall the shield dome impenetrable be.

ZOE

So it's not impenetrable now?

Pause.

ALIEN CAPTIVE

Thou hast tricked me.

BANG. The door flies open. They wheel around.

Charlie stumbles in, slightly singed, still holding her camera.

CHARLIE
You guys are never gonna -

She spots the Alien Captive.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Oh.

She raises her camera and takes a picture. The FLASH lights up the room.

ALIEN CAPTIVE
Mine eyes.

ZOE
(annoyed)
Where did you go?

Charlie slumps into a chair, exhausted.

CHARLIE
Oh man, all over -

ZOE
Listen to me, you cannot run off
without telling anyone, okay?

CHARLIE
(scoffing)
You're not the queen of me.

Zoe starts to respond, but bites her tongue, and turns back to the Alien to resume her interrogation.

Bridget notices Charlie's clothing is burnt.

BRIDGET
Woah, what happened?

ZOE
Guys, can we focus?

CHARLIE
(to Bridget)
Oh I got shot a little bit. I'm fine
though.

ZOE
Guys -

CHARLIE
Check this out.

Zoe clenches her fists and walks towards the garage.
Bridget looks over Charlie's shoulder at her camera.

BRIDGET
Woahhh.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Empty pizza boxes are scattered around. Mark sits by himself, a deeply troubled expression on his face.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ
Sorry, Mr. Winter. Still no response from the Faire.

COMMANDER COOK
We'll keep trying.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ
How are you holding up?

Mark sighs.

MARK WINTER
I'm okay, I'm just super lactose intolerant.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ
What?! Why didn't you say anything?
We could have ordered something else.

MARK WINTER
Well, I didn't want to impose.

COMMANDER COOK
Mr. Winter, you just ate six slices.
We were all impressed, but in retrospect I wish you hadn't.

MARK WINTER
I should probably use the little boys' room.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ
Use the Glade!

Mark staggers off.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ (cont'd)
 Damn it, we only have one restroom.

The FBI Agent rushes in with another printout.

FBI AGENT
 Commander, you're going to want to
 take a look at these readings.

Cook gazes at the printout, then looks up sharply.
 Revelation.

COMMANDER COOK
 Keep trying that radio!

INT. PARK SERVICE GARAGE - DAY

Zoe closes the door behind her and lets out a stifled scream
 of frustration.

Doug is sitting in the police car.

ZOE
 Oh, hi Doug. Just coming in to check
 the radio.

DOUG
 I heard you scream.

ZOE
 Oh that? I just remembered a ...
 scary movie I saw one time.

DOUG
 I scream sometimes too.

He adjusts the mirror, practicing.

DOUG (cont'd)
 (to himself)
 Mirror, side mirror, blind spot,
 indicate, merge. Man, this would be
 such a cool spot for a TikTok vid.

Zoe sits in the passenger seat.

ZOE
 Doug, how are you able to, like,
perform in front of all your
 followers?

DOUG

It took me a while, but there's a
"live" button next to record -

ZOE

No, I mean how are you able to act so
naturally in front of people? And get
people to listen?

DOUG

(to himself)

Gear before steer.

(to Zoe)

It's kind of an industry secret, but
I put on a persona. Big and bold and
larger than life. It's not really me,
or not exactly. Talking to people in
real life is much harder.

He swivels the mirror to look at her.

DOUG (cont'd)

Can I bare myself to you, Zoe?

ZOE

Uh yup.

DOUG

This is the first time I've had an
actual real group of friends.

ZOE

What about all your TikToks where
you're hanging out with friends at
the mall or the bookstore -

DOUG

Strangers, Zoe. Complete strangers.
Sometimes I just start recording and
throw myself into them. I don't even
ask, and people are usually too nice
to say anything. All to make myself
look popular. And it works. I'm cool.
But real friends? It ... hits
different.

He turns to her.

DOUG (cont'd)

Zoe ... I think you're a great queen.

Doug leans closer. He glances at her lips. He's nervous.
Hesitantly they move toward each other.

The radio CRACKLES, rudely interrupting the moment.

COMMANDER COOK (V.O.)
Ren Faire, come in. Are you there?

Zoe snatches the transponder.

ZOE
Yes, this is Zoe.

COMMANDER COOK (V.O.)
We've been trying to get through for a couple hours. The forcefield dome is getting stronger, and we think it's disrupting the radio. We might not have much time.

ZOE
Okay.

COMMANDER COOK (V.O.)
There was a moment about two minutes after the tank fired onto the dome. It dropped out for a few seconds.

Zoe and Doug look at each other.

DOUG
If that boom this morning was the tank, then two minutes later would have been -

ZOE
When the big ship fried Gene.

COMMANDER COOK (V.O.)
So maybe when it diverts power to weapons, the shield comes down.

The cogs turn.

ZOE
Okay. So we lure it out, try and get it to fire again -

COMMANDER COOK (V.O.)
I can have troops at the perimeter within the hour. When the shield comes down, they'll go in.

ZOE
And we'll come out.

DOUG
We just need a way to get its
attention.

ZOE
I think I have a plan.

COMMANDER COOK (V.O.)
I'm glad you're a competent leader,
Zoe. It's all on you.

Zoe begins to protest.

COMMANDER COOK
But be careful. We don't know what
these creatures are capable of. Don't
get too close to any of them.

A beat.

ZOE
There's something else I should
probably tell you.

CUT TO:

INT. PARK SERVICE BUILDING - DAY

Bridget tosses the gun and catches it. The Alien struggles
against the pillory.

ALIEN CAPTIVE
Egad, mine hands do pain me sore.

Zoe and Doug enter. Bridget stands and sidles up to Zoe.

BRIDGET
(quietly)
So did you guys make out?

ZOE
What? No! No.
(wistful)
No.

She strides over to the captive.

ZOE (cont'd)
(to herself)
Big and bold.
(to the Alien Captive)
Alright, alien. Game over. We know
everything.
(MORE)

ZOE (cont'd)

The mothership is what's powering the forcefield, and when it fires it has to divert power and the shield comes down.

A beat.

ALIEN CAPTIVE

Ummmm ... th'art a very lown if thou believest that.

ZOE

I have no idea what that means.

QUINN

(springing up)
How durst thou!

ZOE

But I do know that these - Charlie, show us your pictures - are what's strengthening the forcefield.

Charlie brings over her camera and scrolls through the images - shots of aliens putting up more antennae, shots of aliens noticing her, shots of blurry foliage as she runs away.

ZOE (cont'd)

So all we need to do -

Charlie continues scrolling. Suddenly:

ZOE (cont'd)

Wow.

Doug's eyes go wide. Zoe looks away quickly.

CHARLIE

Whoops, scrolled too far.

ALIEN CAPTIVE

Merciful heaven, mine eyes.

She snatches the camera back and shrugs.

CHARLIE

Hey, they're artistic.

ZOE

Everyone, gather around. Your queen has a plan.

BRIDGET

Yaasssss queen!

Zoe looks at her, appalled.

ZOE

Don't say that. It isn't cool.

She grabs a scroll from a prop bin and unfurls it on the table. It's a specially printed Olde Time-y map of Ye Olde Renaissance Faire, showing the different areas of the park.

Everyone gathers.

ZOE (cont'd)

(to herself)

It's all on me.

(to the others)

Pay close attention.

BATTLE MUSIC.

MONTAGE:

- Zoe draws an X over the park service building, then a circle around the map.

ZOE (O.S.)

This us, this is the alien
forcefield.

- Doug throws down a pile of weapons.
- Military troops jog along the road towards the park.
- Bridget straps on armour.
- Zoe draws an arrow from the park service building down through the field.

ZOE (O.S.) (cont'd)

This is where I'll lure out the
mothership and provoke it to attack.

- Quinn straps a helmet over his jangly jester hat.
- Charlie dual wields short sword and camera.
- Doug beats a sword on an anvil. Sparks fly.
- Zoe draws another arrow from the park service building to the perimeter.

ZOE (O.S.) (cont'd)

We need everyone else at the edge of
the forcefield. When the ship fires,
the forcefield will drop and everyone
will jump out.

- The army troops reach the edge of the forcefield. A commander signals them to get in formation.
- Doug smirks more intensely. He wipes sweat out of his eyes in slow motion. Behind him, Zoe watches, slackjawed.
- Quinn blows fire.
- Bridget cocks the gun dramatically.
- Zoe slams a dagger down into the map.

ZOE
We'll get you all out of here. I'm
going to show these bastards who's
boss.

END MONTAGE

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

The police station is a flurry of activity. Cook gives orders to the FBI and special ops agents running about.

COMMANDER COOK
Get a fully rigged holding van there
immediately! I want it on the ground
with Alpha Unit.
(to herself)
After all these years, if we could
finally get a live sample ...

The radio CRACKLES.

ZOE (V.O.)
Human headquarters, come in.

Schwarz and Brunelle, sitting by the radio, wave Cook over.

COMMANDER COOK
Zoe. You don't have to call us that,
we know we're human.

INTERCUT ZOE/COMMANDER COOK

ZOE
I'm sending my people to the
perimeter.

COMMANDER COOK
What about you?

Zoe hesitates.

ZOE
Is my dad there?

COMMANDER COOK
No, he ate a lot of cheese and he's
been in the bathroom for an hour.
We've had to send our people next
door to the mini mart.

Zoe nods affectionately.

ZOE
That's him alright. Sounds like a
queso lactose intolerance.

A beat.

COMMANDER COOK
What -

ZOE
I'm staying behind.

COMMANDER COOK
Are you sure? Why not send one of
your expendables? You're in charge,
after all.

ZOE
Being queen means taking
responsibility. This is my fight.

COMMANDER COOK
Fair enough. But don't take any more
risks than you have to. Listen to me:
Stay away from the mothership.

ZOE
I'll try and lose it after it fires.
Hopefully I'll be able to find your
troops.

COMMANDER COOK
I'll let them know. God speed, Zoe.

ZOE
Hey - that's Queen Zoe to you.

She hangs up the transponder.

EXT. PARK FIELD - DAY

The sun is going down as the Ren Faire troops assemble on the field of battle. The area is clear of drones.

Zoe is at their head, holding a battleaxe. She stares out to where the mothership lurks, hidden from view, then turns to address the troops.

ZOE

Sorry, I'm not sure what to say. I'm not really good at speeches or whatever, but -

Overwhelmed with battle fury, the rest chime in in their various canons, almost simultaneously -

BRIDGET

Spears shall be shaken!

QUINN

We band of brothers!

DOUG

This is our Independence Day!

ZOE

Please be quiet. Look, these bastards invaded our Ren Faire and trapped us in here. Well, we're gonna show them.

Doug cheers.

DOUG

Yeah, show them by running away!

ZOE

That - that is true.

She has nothing to follow that up with.

ZOE (cont'd)

Places, everyone.

Quinn grabs her by the sleeve.

QUINN

Noble queen! Ask not us happy few to leave thee in the moment of valour! What if we tried something else? I could not live knowing I had deserted thee.

He glances back. Bridget is already heading for the woods. Quinn starts to lose his resolve.

ZOE
This is the best plan. Only one of us
has to stay behind. You should go -

QUINN
'Tis well!

He books it. Doug comes up, an earnest look on his face.

DOUG
Zoe.

She turns to face him. He reaches out and touches her arm.

DOUG (cont'd)
Thank you.

He flees as well.

Zoe takes a deep breath and continues forward. She steps through the bones and ash, the remains of Gene and his horse.

Ahead is her goal: the alien antenna.

EXT. FIELD OUTSIDE HILLSBOROUGH - DAY

The army units are in place. A LIEUTENANT speaks into a walkie talkie.

LIEUTENANT
All units in place, ma'am. Awaiting
opportunity to enter the occupied
zone.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Cook talks into her laptop.

COMMANDER COOK
Be ready, lieutenant.

EXT. PARK FIELD - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Zoe stands before the antenna. The thing beeps and hums. She lifts her axe and brings it down with all her might.

EXT. WOODS - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The reenactors run through the woods. They hear the echoing BANG of metal on metal and look up fearfully at the sky.

INT. ALIEN MOTHERSHIP - BRIDGE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The gloomy interior of the mothership. Weird, shrill ALARMS echo through.

ALIEN PILOT

(subtitles)

Antenna 31, captain! It looks like it's under attack. Should we raise the ship to defend it?

ALIEN CAPTAIN

(subtitles)

Not yet. There is another way.

The alien mouth grins malevolently.

EXT. PARK FIELD - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The antenna falls to the ground and lies crackling and smoking.

Zoe looks up triumphantly, waiting for the mothership to rise.

EXT. WOODS - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The reenactors plunge on through the woods, but one by one they stop short, staring head, horrified. BUZZING fills the air.

EXT. PARK FIELD - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

No mothership. Zoe is growing concerned.

SHOUTS from behind her. She wheels. Doug bursts out on the opposite side of the field.

DOUG

Zoe! Pods!

The other reenactors rush back out of the woods. A dozen alien pods are hard on their heels. Bridget flings the gun at one.

For a moment, Zoe watches in horror. Then she starts running back toward the the park service building.

ZOE

Come on!

The other reenactors draw level with her, but the pods are closing in like a net.

Zoe flings her axe at one, but once again it bounces harmlessly off an invisible shield.

They duck and weave through alien projectiles. Zoe lifts her head to look in front, only to see half a dozen alien craft blocking their path.

Dead end. She stops.

QUINN

(yelling)

O wretched ones!

The pods pivot towards him.

QUINN (cont'd)

Thou sickening boils, thou carbuncles!

Quinn realises he has bitten off more than he can chew. As the pods gather speed, he stares into the face of certain death, bearing relentlessly down on him.

Just when it seems that all is lost -

BEN (O.S.)

(yelling)

At dawn, look to the east!

BRIDGET

Gandalf!

The filthy, crazed, ragged figure of Ben bursts out nearby, leaps into the air, and sends his javelin straight into the weapons port of the closest pod.

Instantly smoke pours out of the craft, and it spins off, straight into another, which crashes into another, and like dominoes they cascade across the field.

The path is clear.

BEN

(under his breath)

Goddamn aliens.

A rogue shot explodes the turf by Doug's feet, sending him flying. Bridget pulls him up and they stumble on.

Charlie hesitates. She turns to take a picture. Bridget grabs her and barrels onwards.

BEN (cont'd)
(to Zoe)
Did Quinn break yet?

Zoe takes Ben's hand.

ZOE
You fucking asshole!

They run together.

EXT. FIELD OUTSIDE HILLSBOROUGH - DAY

The soldiers wait nervously. The forcefield is stronger than ever.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Cook watches the monitors. Schwarz, Brunelle, Mikayla, and Mark all stand nearby, watching in silence.

COMMANDER COOK
I'm sure they have everything under control.

CUT TO:

INT. PARK SERVICE BUILDING - DAY

It's pandemonium. Doug collapses dramatically into a chair. Bridget holds a bleeding arm.

BRIDGET
I don't know how much longer I can take this! I've had nothing to eat but turkey legs for fourteen hours!

She grabs an axe, smashes open a barrel, and starts quaffing mead.

QUINN
(humming nervously)
*Well Dagonetto I am called, /
My toes are long, my chin is bald -*

Zoe slumps to the ground.

ZOE
What did I do wrong? I failed. I'm a
terrible leader.

QUINN
My noble, royal queen! Say not -

The Alien captive laughs sickeningly.

ALIEN CAPTIVE
Foolsome patches. Ye cannot stand
'gainst our armada.

Ben takes Bridget's axe and marches towards it. Quinn tries
to stop him.

BEN
Quinn.

QUINN
Master Benjamin, comport thyself with
honour -

BEN
Quinn, grow up!

He snatches Quinn's jangling jester hat from his head and
tosses it out the door.

BEN (cont'd)
Be honest with yourself for once in
your life!

ALIEN CAPTIVE
(mocking)
Grow up, Quinn.

QUINN
(to the Alien)
Quiet, knave.

He half-turns, warding Ben back with one hand.

ALIEN CAPTIVE
Thou brain-sick tallow-catch. Soon
forsooth you all shall be mown down
as wheat to the scythe.

QUINN
Silence, knave, I say! Lest - lest my
temper o'erthrow me!

ALIEN CAPTIVE
Thou art the knave, joit-head. Ready
thyself to meet thy worthless gods.

BEN
Quinn -

Quinn is losing it.

QUINN
(to the Alien Captive)
Verily do I warn thee -

ALIEN CAPTIVE
Fie, scullion.

QUINN
Now -

ALIEN CAPTIVE
Pockmark.

QUINN
(yelling)
Well guess what, Susan, fuck you!

Shocked silence fills the room. Ben lowers his axe. He looks at Zoe, then pointedly towards Doug.

After a long pause, Quinn slowly rises and makes his way into the garage, closing the door behind him.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Commander Cook comes out the front door, pulling a pack of cigarettes from her pocket.

Mark is already there, looking off into the night.

COMMANDER COOK
Mr. Winter. Smoke?

Mark thinks.

MARK WINTER
You know what, sure. If we're all
going to get wiped out by aliens, one
cigarette's not going to make a
difference.

COMMANDER COOK
We don't know that that's what's
happening.

She hands him a cigarette and lights it.

COMMANDER COOK (cont'd)
But it's definitely a possibility.

Mikayla exits the front door.

MIKAYLA
Hey, you guys got an extra?

As Cook hands her a cigarette, Schwarz, Brunelle, and the FBI Agent all come out too.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ
Man, I could use a smoke.

DEPUTY BRUNELLE
Can I get one of those?

FBI AGENT
Commander, permission to have a cigarette.

COMMANDER COOK
Jesus Christ, someone's got to stay in there to monitor the situation.

They all look down the line to the FBI Agent.

FBI AGENT
(begrudgingly)
Fine.

He goes back inside.

Mark stands at a distance. With great concentration he takes a drag, then stifles a cough.

Mikayla comes over to him.

MIKAYLA
You don't actually smoke, do you?

MARK WINTER
No. I heard it calms your nerves, though.

MIKAYLA
You shouldn't start.

MARK WINTER
I wish there were something I could do. I wish I didn't feel so powerless.

He gives up and throws the cigarette away.

MIKAYLA
I know what you mean. I feel like I
let them down by not being there to
help.

They look towards the distant sky, lit up electric purple by
the shimmering forcefield.

MIKAYLA (cont'd)
A hangover in forty five pounds of
armour is no joke though.

MARK WINTER
Do you know Zoe well?

MIKAYLA
Not really, just through the Faire.
She seems cool, though. And she talks
about you.

MARK WINTER
Really?

MIKAYLA
Raising her by yourself. She's proud
of you.

Mark thinks for a long moment.

MARK WINTER
Can you take me there?

EXT. POLICE STATION PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Mikayla's horse is tied up in the station parking lot. A
police officer is feeding and tending to it very
enthusiastically, whispering lovingly into its ear.

Mikayla leads Mark around the building.

MIKAYLA
Get on.

She unties the horse, mounts, and gives Mark a hand up.

They're about to take off when -

MIKAYLA (cont'd)
Wait, take this.

She leans down and pulls her medieval helmet from somewhere. Mark puts it on and grips Mikayla as if they were on a motorbike.

MARK WINTER
(awkwardly)
What's the horsepower on this baby -

They gallop off.

INT. PARK SERVICE BUILDING - NIGHT

The door to the garage CREAKS open. From the gloom beyond comes a monstrous sight: Quinn, in khakis and a polo, hair slicked back somehow, a dour expression on his face.

The others watch him approach.

BRIDGET
Quinn -

QUINN
Who's Dagonetto Hop-Frog the Jester?
I'm just Quinn.

BRIDGET
That's what I said -

QUINN
Quinn Sparacello, a twenty first
century loser with enormous student
loan debt, and no good prospects,
trapped in a dead end job. All grown
up.

The Alien CLICKS at him.

QUINN (cont'd)
(to the Alien)
Welcome to earth, asshole. It sucks
here.

ALIEN CAPTIVE
Thou simpering -

Quinn throws a spoon at the Alien. It flinches, but the spoon bounces off its head shield.

ALIEN CAPTIVE (cont'd)
(subtitles)
[Alien laughter]

In a cold fury, Quinn tosses a tankard, a phone charger, a horseshoe, someone's wallet. All bounce right off and land around the room.

QUINN
You like that?

BRIDGET
(half-hearted)
Quinn.

QUINN
Who gives a shit, Bridget? There's no Geneva convention in space.

Amidst the violence, Ben turns to Zoe.

BEN
Zoe -

ZOE
Don't ask me anything, please! I should never have been queen. I can't even keep a Neopet alive.

BEN
It's not your fault.

ZOE
I'm the last person in the world who should be trusted with responsibility. I've never made a decision for myself. Even being here.

She looks up at him.

ZOE (cont'd)
I didn't join the Ren Faire because I wanted to get closer to Doug. Or because I needed a job, or even because I love nerdy fantasy shit. It was because of you.

BEN
What do you mean?

ZOE
You're the decisive one. You're the leader. Everyone listens to you. You came out in middle school and became everyone's hero. I mean you have all these girls crushing on you and you don't even like girls.
(MORE)

ZOE (cont'd)
It's always been easier for me to
just follow you.

BEN
Zoe -

ZOE
I couldn't survive by myself.

In the background, the violence continues. Coins pepper the Alien's shield, to no avail.

ALIEN CAPTIVE
(to Quinn)
Nought canst thou do to harm me,
weakling. Thy -

Quinn flings a child's wooden sword. It smacks the Alien right in the face.

ALIEN CAPTIVE (cont'd)
Ouch.

Silence. Everyone turns to look.

ALIEN CAPTIVE (cont'd)
Uh oh.

Hesitantly Zoe rises and walks up to it. She holds the metal tankard above the Alien and drops it. It bounces off.

She pulls her own wooden sword and brings it down gently on the Alien's face.

ALIEN CAPTIVE (cont'd)
Don't touch me.

ZOE
(spelling it out)
Wood. Wood goes right through.

BRIDGET
Waaaaaaait, yeah, this thing totally
got knocked out by a tree branch.

BEN
And my javelin went right into one of
the pods.

Doug struggles up.

DOUG
And my arrow! The only one without a
metal head ...

BRIDGET
That's right.

Doug slumps back down.

DOUG
(softly)
Doug. I did something too.

Charlie gasps. They turn to her.

CHARLIE
Of course! For millennia the aliens
left earth alone because their
technology can't detect organic,
carbon-based material. They're
weakest against people clad in skins
and plants, fighting with sticks and
stones. Now that everyone uses metal
weapons and always wears clothing
with metal and polyester, and carries
phones and watches, it's the perfect
time to strike. Think about it!
"Knock on wood!" "Sticks and stones!"

A History Channel moment:

CHARLIE (cont'd)
... aliens.

A beat.

BEN
(skeptical)
How do you know that?

CHARLIE
I don't, I'm just riffing.

ALIEN CAPTIVE
You know nothing -

BRIDGET
No, *you* know nothing, motherfucker!
Where's the big ship? Why didn't it
come out?

The Alien laughs tensely.

ALIEN CAPTIVE
Fear not, milady. 'Tis but resting
for the night.
(MORE)

ALIEN CAPTIVE (cont'd)

On the morrow, when the sun favours
us once more with its power, it will
rise and make an end of ye, and as
our dome turns towards our homeworld,
then can we hail our vasty navy to
descend upon this ripe sphere.

BRIDGET

Well, humanity, we had a good run. It
was probably nearly over anyway. You
know species are going extinct
hundreds of times faster than the
meteor that wiped out the dinosaurs?
Thanks, climate change.

ZOE

Wait, this is a good thing. We have
until dawn. We can still do
something.

ALIEN CAPTIVE

... Thou hast tricked me again.

Charlie steps up to the pilloried Alien.

CHARLIE

So if organic material can pass
through the shields ...

She slowly reaches out a hand. It passes through the Alien's
shield and rests on its unprotected head.

ALIEN CAPTIVE

Eww, gross.

CHARLIE

Then we could get through the dome
whenever we wanted to. We can get
out.

BRIDGET

Organic material. Okay. Give me eight
seconds.

She starts stripping off her polyester tracksuit.

ZOE

But if there's only a few hours, and
we can't even warn the others ...

They look at her.

BEN

What do you mean?

ZOE
I don't know. Forget it.

Bridget takes Zoe's hand.

BRIDGET
Zoe. A maniac handed you a crown. It was dumb luck, you didn't ask for it. But here we are. Democracy? I think at this point we all know that's a joke. We need a *dictatorship*. We need one person making decisions or we're going to keep running around like headless chickens. So tell us what to do.

Zoe looks at Ben.

BEN
You don't have to do it alone, Zoe. We're all here with you.

He looks down.

BEN (cont'd)
Listen, I'm not as strong and self-assured as you think I am. There's something I've been wanting to tell you -

A ghostly sound interrupts the revelation:

MARK WINTER (V.O.)
Zoe! Zoe, can you hear me? It's dad!

His voice reverberates distantly, echoing from all directions.

Zoe rushes outside. The rest follow.

EXT. PARK FIELD - NIGHT

The voice seems to come from all around them. Zoe looks at the glowing sky.

ZOE
Dad! Are you -

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD OUTSIDE HILLSBOROUGH - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Silence.

Mark and Mikayla are with the soldiers waiting outside the forcefield. A small crowd has gathered, including seven teenage girls and one massive, burly man, all with signs saying "We love you @Weird_Flex_Doug".

Mark yells into a megaphone.

MARK WINTER

Zoe!

MIKAYLA

Mark, she can't hear you.

Mark doesn't listen to her.

MARK WINTER

Zo!

INT. ALIEN MOTHERSHIP - BRIDGE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

ALIEN PILOT

(subtitles)

Captain, there's a disturbance at the perimeter.

ALIEN CAPTAIN

(subtitles)

Investigate.

The Pilot presses a few buttons.

EXT. FIELD OUTSIDE HILLSBOROUGH - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

MARK WINTER

Zoe! I'm here. I know I'm really bad at talking to you and telling you how I feel. This morning, that confusing diarrhea story, it came out all wrong.

The soldiers glance at him.

MARK WINTER (cont'd)

Not like - That's actually pretty funny. What I meant was that you don't have to run away from responsibility, but you also don't have to do everything yourself.

(MORE)

MARK WINTER (cont'd)
Relying on others isn't a weakness. I wish I'd had people helping me throw sawdust and spray Clorox and wash scrubs and coax the cats down from on top of the fridge -

SOLDIER
Alright, Mr. Winter. Just write her a thoughtful card.

MARK WINTER
You do have people, you have a team.

EXT. PARK FIELD - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Zoe looks around at the other reenactors.

MARK WINTER (V.O.)
(laughing)
I can't believe that my daughter is literally fighting aliens.

EXT. FIELD OUTSIDE HILLSBOROUGH - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Mark takes a breath.

MARK WINTER
I love you, tiger cub. I'm so proud of you. Save earth, Zoe. It means the world to me ...

He trails off. Inside the bubble, glowing lights appear through the trees: alien pods, attracted by the noise.

Mark takes a step back.

A soldier steps up and bangs on the forcefield with his gun. The pods gather around the noise. More soldiers do the same, drawing pods out of the woods.

EXT. PARK FIELD - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

ZOE
Dad?

The reenactors watch as glowing lights vanish into the woods, heading towards the disturbance at the perimeter.

DOUG
Where are they going?

BEN
It's empty. This is our chance.

ZOE
We can't run away.

She thinks.

ZOE (cont'd)
We need a plan, and we need a team.

She looks back towards the park service building, where Quinn hangs back, still gloomy.

ZOE (cont'd)
We need everyone.

She leaves the others and approaches Quinn.

QUINN
(dour)
What's up.

ZOE
What do you think? What should we do?

QUINN
Who cares? Let's just get out here
and back to our boring lives.

ZOE
Come on, Dagonetto. You always have
creative ideas.

He scoffs and turns away. Zoe clears her throat.

ZOE (cont'd)
Forsooth, sirrah. Thy wits and
bravery are beyond compare.

Quinn cracks a smile, then quickly frowns.

ZOE (cont'd)
Thou hath never been afraid in the
field of battle, valiant jester.
Today our duty is to face our foe and
brave great danger, and I, Queen Zoe,
choose thou, bold Dagonetto Hop-Frog,
to be my right hand, my general.
(becoming earnest)
Where I alone wouldst fail, together
we merry band can defeat our enemies
and save the world.

The others have come up behind her quietly. Quinn looks up at her.

QUINN
"Hast".

ZOE
What?

QUINN
Nothing. People have pushed me to be
"normal" for so long. No one ever
wanted me to go the other way.

Zoe spots the jester's hat lying nearby. She picks it up and places it on his head.

ZOE
Arise, Sir Dagonetto.

He smiles and stands proudly, his anachronistic spirit returning to him.

QUINN
My queen, where hast thou learned to
speak thus? It is a great power.

ZOE
A great power indeed. I learned it
from you.

She turns to the others.

ZOE (cont'd)
So, team, what have we got?

QUINN
The power of imagination, and
pretend.

BEN
An absolutely chaotic sense of
bravado.

CHARLIE
We've gathered information.

DOUG
We have a team.

BRIDGET
(flexing)
Raw physical strength.

Ben rests his hand on Zoe's shoulder.

BEN
We have a leader.

ZOE
And I think I have a plan.

BRIDGET
Great, I'm totally on board. As long
as I get to keep any valuable alien
plunder.

DOUG
What is it with you and money?

BRIDGET
Ummm maybe the fact that I have an
MBA and I still walk dogs? I'm a
mercenary.

Zoe leans in.

ZOE
Listen closely.

EXT. FIELD OUTSIDE HILLSBOROUGH - NIGHT

GLOWING LIGHT on the faces of Mark, Mikayla, and the
soldiers.

SOLDIER
(into a walkie-talkie)
Commander, something's happening.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Schwarz watches the feed anxiously.

SHERIFF SCHWARZ
(to Deputy Brunelle)
Get down there and keep an eye on
things.

Brunelle glances around, a fresh coffee mug in his hand, but
every surface is covered in paperwork and equipment. Finally
he puts it down in an open drawer, closes it, and heads for
the door.

COMMANDER COOK
(into the radio)
What is it? What do you see?

EXT. FIELD OUTSIDE HILLSBOROUGH - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The Soldier doesn't respond.

Beyond the forcefield, dozens of pods have gathered, looking out at the humans.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALIEN MOTHERSHIP - NIGHT

The vast body of the alien mothership squats in a clearing, shiny and vaguely organic.

A beat up pod zooms out of the woods. As it approaches the mothership's hull, a door slides open and the pod enters.

INT. ALIEN MOTHERSHIP - POD BAY - NIGHT

The bay is long and curved, shiny and chitinous like the outside of the craft.

A rush of steam as the pod docks. Most of the other pod docks lining the cabin are empty.

An ALIEN SUPERVISOR stands nearby with a clipboard.

ALIEN SUPERVISOR

(subtitles)

Man, that thing got beat up. What happened, you drag race through a grenade factory?

The pod starts to open. The Alien Supervisor's eyes widen.

INT. ALIEN MOTHERSHIP - BRIDGE - NIGHT

Business as usual on the bridge. Several Aliens man various workstations. Lights glow like veins in the walls. Through a transparent floor the workings of part of the engine and the cannon array can be seen.

The Captain is joking around with the crew.

ALIEN CAPTAIN

(subtitles)

So anyway, then I told her I wasn't going to pay for a new hyperspace recoil shaft, and if she wanted someone to yell at she could take it up with the Admiralty!

The crew laughs.

ALIEN CAPTAIN
(subtitles)
Mother in laws.

A light starts flashing on a control panel. They peer at it.

ALIEN CAPTAIN
(subtitles)
What does that light mean?

ALIEN PILOT
(subtitles)
Ummm ...

A loud THUMP and the JINGLING of bells.

QUINN (O.S.)
Ow!

The Aliens slowly turn around.

There in the doorway are Zoe, Ben, Bridget, Doug, and Quinn, brandishing wooden weapons. Charlie carries her camera. Quinn holds a stubbed toe, wincing.

ZOE
Hey, assholes.

A beat.

ALIEN CAPTAIN
(subtitles)
Get them!

The Aliens ready their weapons and begin to charge. Zoe's smile falls. *Oh shit.*

FLASHES of her nightmare: armoured friends falling beneath sword and spear. It overwhelms her.

Then all of a sudden, ghostly voices echo in her head:

GENE (V.O.)
We're all in this together.

COMMANDER COOK (V.O.)
You're a competent leader.

JON SNOW (V.O.)
You can do this, Zoe.

MARK WINTER (V.O.)
I'm so proud of you.

QUINN (V.O.)
Ne'er, but ne'er, break thine
character.

She looks over to see Quinn lifting his crude wooden club unsteadily. He locks eyes with her and smiles.

QUINN
My queen.

Zoe steels herself.

ZOE
Hey aliens.

She raises her sword.

ZOE (cont'd)
Time to eat wood.

Behind her, Ben makes a face.

Zoe charges. The other reenactors follow.

ZOE (cont'd)
(with supreme,
unthinking
confidence)
Ben and Bridget, go left! Doug and
Quinn, strafe right! Charlie, *now!*

Charlie lifts her camera and takes a picture. FLASH. The Aliens falter, staggering.

Zoe connects with the first line and moves through her fight choreography: jab, riposte, block, overhead sweep. This time, it's fucking awesome. Aliens are battered down by her attacks.

Nearby, Bridget hammers down her foes with a wooden mallet. Quinn drums them with a club. Ben whales on the Aliens with a quarterstaff.

Zoe turns to see the face of a snarling, intimidating Alien. For a moment it seems like she's met her match, then a wooden arrow zips past and buries itself in the Alien's throat.

Zoe is sprayed with dark blue blood. She turns to see Doug giving her a thumbs up. Nice. She gives him a super awkward blood spattered wink, then batters one last Alien.

The invaders are defeated.

QUINN

Huzzah!

The ghostly voice of Jon Snow sounds in Zoe's head:

JON SNOW (V.O.)

I knew you could do it, Zoe.

ZOE

(whispering)

Thank you.

Eyes closed, she kisses the air.

COUGH. Ben nods towards the far side of the room, where the Alien Captain cowers.

The reenactors nurse fresh injuries - cuts, bruises, split lips. They stride over to the Captain.

ZOE (cont'd)

Hey, you!

A pulsing light appears on a panel on the Captain's chest.

Quinn gets up in its face, shit-talking Ren Faire style:

QUINN

What now, thou base ruffian? What say'st thou now? By the hammer of Vulcan! Prepare to feast on dung, thou mother-lover. Aye, aye, forsooth -

The panel PINGS!

PANEL (V.O.)

Translator calibrated.

ALIEN CAPTAIN

I prithee, sirrahs, spare me.

They turn to look at Quinn. For fuck's sake.

QUINN

I shall excuse myself.

He goes to stand in the corner.

ALIEN CAPTAIN

Noble conquerer, I entreat thee.
Sooth hast thou lodged me. Yet
dispatch me not.

ZOE

Listen to me.

BRIDGET

You better get the fuck out of here,
alien! Earth is for humans, we don't
want your kind here!

ZOE

Bridget.

BRIDGET

Sorry, my queen.

She stands back.

BEN

(whispering to
Bridget)

I'm not sure how exactly, but I think
that's racist.

ZOE

(to the Alien Captain)

A spaceship full of alien invaders
with advanced weaponry versus a team
of nerds with wooden weapons, and we
beat you. It's over. You're going to
take your pods and leave this planet,
and never come back.

ALIEN CAPTAIN

Aye, brave queen. It shall be as thou
commandest.

ZOE

Swear it.

ALIEN CAPTAIN

Thy will be done.

ZOE

Swear.

She readies her wooden sword.

ALIEN CAPTAIN

Yea, I do avow, we shall quit this
world in peace, ne'er to return.

Satisfied, Zoe gets up and begins to move away, then turns back.

ZOE
Seriously, though, fuck you.

Quinn leans in close to the Alien Captain one last time.

QUINN
(whispering)
Fuck you.

EXT. FIELD OUTSIDE HILLSBOROUGH - NIGHT

The soldiers watch the eerie glow of the pods. All at once, the pods vanish back into the trees.

MARK WINTER
What's happening?

EXT. ALIEN MOTHERSHIP - NIGHT

Glowing pods pour back into the mothership.

EXT. PARK FIELD - NIGHT

Zoe, Ben, Doug, Bridget and Quinn stride back across the field triumphantly, wiping blood and sweat from their faces.

BRIDGET
We did it, y'all. America wins again.
Fourth of July. Superbowl. Military
industrial complex. Booyah.

DOUG
Wait, we *are* the good guys, right?

Charlie pulls up her camera to show Doug a shot of him killing an Alien with a perfectly executed bow and arrow strike.

DOUG (cont'd)
Woahh.

CHARLIE
Want a copy for the 'Gram?

DOUG
Yeah, maybe ...

Ben nudges Zoe.

BEN
Hey, this would be a great moment to
grab Doug and make out with him.

Zoe glances back.

ZOE
Feels like the wrong mood.

Bridget pulls out a tooth.

BRIDGET
Fuck. I don't have dental.

EXT. FIELD OUTSIDE HILLSBOROUGH - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Brunelle runs up, panting furiously.

DEPUTY BRUNELLE
What did I miss?

EXT. PARK FIELD - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Charlie jogs in front to get a group shot.

Then blue light washes over her. She looks up in horror.

With a ROAR, the vast hulk of the mothership looms up over
the trees, accelerating towards them.

INT. ALIEN MOTHERSHIP - BRIDGE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The Alien Captain sits back in its command chair. Other
Aliens have returned to their stations.

The Captain raises a hand. The Aliens work their controls.

EXT. PARK FIELD - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The ship speeds faster. The weapons array begins to glow.

The reenactors watch helplessly.

EXT. FIELD OUTSIDE HILLSBOROUGH - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The Tank Operator, leaning against the tank, blows a massive
bubble. POP.

The forcefield flickers and drops out.

The Soldier yells into the walkie talkie:

SOLDIER
Commander, the shield is down!

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Cook has been pacing. Hearing this, she springs into action, knocking Schwarz back, who drops his coffee on the ground.

He holds his empty, coffee-less hand in the air, but this time it doesn't get refilled. No Brunelle.

COMMANDER COOK
Go, go, go!

EXT. FIELD OUTSIDE HILLSBOROUGH - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The soldiers pour into the forest. Brunelle, still massively out of breath, draws his gun with one hand, brandishes his badge in the other, and dashes in.

DEPUTY BRUNELLE
Hillsborough PD!

Mikayla grabs Mark and hauls him up onto her horse. Together they charge in.

INT. ALIEN MOTHERSHIP - BRIDGE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The Captain smiles cruelly. The sound of ENGINES AND MACHINERY is overwhelming.

EXT. PARK FIELD - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The ROARING grows. The weapons array glows fiercely. The reenactors are sitting ducks.

INT. ALIEN MOTHERSHIP - BRIDGE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

CLUNK! The ROARING cuts out abruptly.

The Captain's smile drops. It looks down.

Though the clear floor, we can see Zoe's wooden sword jammed into the weapons array.

The Captain looks up. All is quiet.

ALIEN CAPTAIN

Oh, fate so cruel that proffers thus
an end /
To one that hath endured nigh endless
wars, /
Unyielding kings and sovereigns
brought to bend, /
And greater planets subjugated
scores.

He rises and moves slowly through the silent bridge.

ALIEN CAPTAIN (cont'd)

Though mightiest among my kind I be /
Still as the lowest am I laid to
rest. /
Then mark this well all you who
follow me: /
'Twas Earth, so seeming weak, that
did me best.

EXT. PARK FIELD - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The mothership explodes.

ALIENS

(subtitle)

[Alien screams]

Flaming debris rains down around them. Fire lights up their faces.

A charred wooden sword sails out of the sky and sticks in the ground right in front of them.

ZOE

(incredibly cool)

Sorry to burst your bubble.

(to the others)

Did you guys hear that?

MARK WINTER (O.S.)

Don't you know -

Through the flames and smoke a galloping horse bursts, carrying Mikayla and Mark through the smoldering remains of the alien invasion.

MARK WINTER

- smoking is bad for you?

ZOE

Dad!

With surprising grace he leaps from the saddle and snatches Zoe up in a hug. Fire roars behind them, and the alien equivalent of a hubcap rolls along the grass.

Slowly, Charlie lifts her camera. FLASH.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. ZOE'S KITCHEN - DAY

INSERT - "HILLSBOROUGH TIMES" NEWSPAPER

The headline reads "REN FAIRE VERSUS ALIENS". Underneath is Charlie's picture of the burning wreckage of the spacecraft, five Ren Faire reenactors standing in front, one proud dad, and a knight on horseback charging through.

INT. WINTER HOUSE - ZOE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Zoe's alarm clock RINGS.

Zoe wakes abruptly. She shuts off the alarm, then looks around, disoriented. She locks eyes with the poster of Jon Snow. *Was it all a dream?*

She struggles out of bed.

INT. WINTER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

As Zoe comes downstairs, she spots Commander Cook standing with Mark in the kitchen, chatting. Mark has his hand jammed down the garbage disposal.

MARK WINTER
(looking up)
Morning, Zo! Look what Katrina got you.

ZOE
(mumbling)
"Katrina"?

She glances over at the wall. Her charred wooden sword sits on the shelf next to her lonely National Latin Exam medal.

ZOE (cont'd)
Wow.

COMMANDER COOK
No time for breakfast, we need to get to the studio.

Zoe takes a deep breath. Mark smiles.

MARK WINTER
You got this. Here.

He hands her his truck keys.

EXT. WINTER HOUSE - DAY

They step out. In the driveway, the pickup is horrifically smashed up.

MARK WINTER
Oh right.

All at once masses of REPORTERS rush over the lawn, clamouring with questions.

REPORTER 1
Miss Winter! Are there more aliens where that came from?

ZOE
I don't -

REPORTER 2
Were you able to communicate with them?

REPORTER 3
Miss Winter, how many aliens did you personally kill?

The throng grows quiet.

ZOE
Jeez, I don't even know.

This provokes an even greater outburst of questions. Commander Cook pulls them through the crowd.

At the edge of the throng, woman in her late 40s (ADMISSIONS OFFICER) comes up with a friend (KIT HARINGTON) Zoe can't make out.

COMMANDER COOK
Please, no more questions.

ADMISSIONS OFFICER
Uh, sorry, I'm not a reporter.
(MORE)

ADMISSIONS OFFICER (cont'd)
(to Zoe)
Zoe Winter? My name's Margaret
Kaplan, I'm an admissions officer
from Yale. It's in Connecticut.

Zoe and Mark exchange a look.

ZOE
Yeah I've heard of it.

ADMISSIONS OFFICER
Would you be interested in attending?

ZOE
I didn't apply, I actually didn't
apply anywhere. My SAT scores were
awful -

ADMISSIONS OFFICER
You don't have to! We'd be honoured
to admit a hero like you.

Her younger friend chimes in.

KIT HARINGTON
Yale's a great school.

Zoe squints and recognises him as Game of Thrones
heartthrob -

ZOE
Kit Harington?!

KIT HARINGTON
Nice to meet you.

ZOE
(gushing)
I can't tell you how much you helped
me, the way you came from nothing as
a poor orphan and ended up forging
your own destiny and shaping the
future of Westeros.

KIT HARINGTON
That was the character Jon Snow, Zoe.
That was fiction.

ZOE
Did you come here just to see me?

KIT HARINGTON

Yes. Actually no, I'm visiting my cousins. But I really think you should go to Yale.

ADMISSIONS OFFICER

You can have a single, Zoe. No roommate.

ZOE

I don't know. I'll think about it.

The Reporters start to clamour again.

A Prius pulls up nearby. Ben waves from the driver's seat.

BEN

Quick, get in!

Zoe heads towards the passenger door, and the other two follow. As she passes by Kit Harington -

ZOE

(loudly whispering)
You're so beautiful.
(quickly, to Ben)
Hey, Ben!

Kit Harington and the Admissions Officer stand awkwardly in silence. A lull as the Reporters watch the heroes drive off.

Kit Harington turns to them.

KIT HARINGTON

Hey, I'm Kit Harington.

The tumult resumes. Cameras flash.

EXT. LOCAL NEWS STATION - DAY

The Prius comes to a halt on the gravel outside a concrete building with an antenna array, the local news station.

MARK WINTER

Here we go.

Mark and Commander Cook get out and make for the door, but Ben clears his throat. Zoe hangs back.

ZOE

Everything alright?

BEN

Yeah, yeah. I've just been thinking. They way I was so determined to make Quinn break character and just be who he really is, it wasn't about him. I haven't been true to who I am.

He fiddles with his keys.

BEN (cont'd)

Pushing you towards Doug, same thing. I wanted you to make a move on someone you clearly liked because I couldn't.

ZOE

What do you mean?

BEN

Kerri Santos. I mean, who has themselves all figured out in middle school?

He sighs.

BEN (cont'd)

I don't know why coming out the second time would be harder, but it is. I'm bi, Zoe. And I do like Kerri Santos. She asked me to the summer dance, and I think I'm going to go with her.

Zoe laughs and locks him in a hug.

ZOE

Amazing. I'm here for you, buddy.

BEN

Thank you. Seeing you change, seeing you beat a literal alien invasion, it helped put everything in perspective. So thanks.

Zoe instinctively begins to deflect the praise, but thinks better of it.

ZOE

You're welcome.

They start walking towards the station.

ZOE (cont'd)
And hey, more options.
Congratulations.

The CRUNCH of gravel. Bridget pulls up on a shiny new BMX.

BRIDGET
You're bi, huh? Nice one, me too.
High five.

She's already out of high five range.

BEN
(calling after)
Nice bike!

BRIDGET
Thanks, I'm rich now. I sold our life
rights.

Doug holds the station door open for Bridget as she hops off
and enters without breaking stride.

DOUG
Hey, Zoe. There's something I wanted
to ask you.

He looks at her nervously for a moment. Then a change comes
over him as he puts on his cool guy persona.

DOUG (cont'd)
Well, you know how the summer dance
is coming up. I was thinking if,
like, you'd low key want to go with
me, that would kind of slap.

ZOE
No.

Doug stutters for a moment.

ZOE (cont'd)
Sorry, I should have pretended to
think about it for a moment. What I
mean is, we've all been through so
much together that we're almost like
siblings -

Doug drops his persona.

DOUG
Actually that's a huge relief.

ZOE

- and I wouldn't want to - What?

DOUG

Honestly, this public persona I've made for myself, I've been realising how much it plays into a traditional patriarchal narrative. Men as self-sufficient protagonists, women as little more than objects, validated by the men who choose them. But real life isn't like that. We aren't defined by gender, or by the roles we play in romantic relationships. Our generation has an opportunity to break this narrative and value individual expression, as well as platonic friendships, more highly.

He touches her arm affectionately.

DOUG (cont'd)

And in the end, which of us really needs validation more?

He gestures to his phone.

DOUG (cont'd)

This need to be idolised, it's not healthy for me. On TikTok I have hundreds of followers. But I'll follow you into battle any day.

She's about to respond, when -

MARK WINTER (O.S.)

Zoe! They need you.

ZOE

Thanks, Doug.

She turns. From her pocket she draws Doug's sweaty handkerchief. She gives it one last farewell sniff, tosses it into a trashcan nearby, and goes inside.

Ben has been standing nearby, politely pretending not to pay attention. He smiles and goes in. Doug follows.

DOUG

Ben, do you want to go to the summer dance?

BEN
Uhhhh same as Zoe. I think of you as
a sibling. Also I'm going with Kerri
Santos.

DOUG
Aw nice one, man.

INT. NEWS ROOM - DAY

The Anchors, mostly returned to their former composure,
present the news. The Male Anchor now shows off a flashy
engagement ring.

FEMALE ANCHOR
... which is great news for
Hillsborough, as, according to local
officials, our humble state park is
almost certain to receive national
monument status.

MALE ANCHOR
Now certified 100% alien free.

They both laugh.

FEMALE ANCHOR
Now, in a very special segment, we're
joined live by the renaissance heroes
who fought off these invaders.

MALE ANCHOR
(turning)
So, just what happened in that alien
bubble?

MONTAGE, as each reenactor is interviewed individually.
MUSIC builds.

- LOWER THIRD: "Ben Ortega, high school student"

BEN
It was the first day and we hadn't
even opened. Then these things
started appearing.

- "Charlie Vu, pulitzer-winning photojournalist"

CHARLIE
When they popped up, zooming around
in their drones and shooting at us, I
knew I had to do something.

- "Zoe Winter, queen"

ZOE

We were never worried. We had it under control.

- "Doug Kimura, high school student, TikTok personality"

DOUG

No cap we kept seeing like more and more of these sus dudes and I was like woah this is totally -

- "Quinn Sparacello, jester"

QUINN

- fantastical beyond imagining, such creatures beggar belief! Why, quoth we, and wherefore came they hither?

- "Bridget McMillan, 'big time movie producer'"

BRIDGET

(looking into camera)

I mean, I expected a good turn out for the Faire, but not aliens!

(back to interviewer)

And the king guy died.

CHARLIE

I did recon by myself.

BEN

I drew them off.

DOUG

I used my longbow skills to take down around ...

(he counts, adds a few)

... eleven of them. Yeet!

QUINN

I taught them King's English!

BRIDGET

(counting enthusiastically)

And two cops, a guy selling turkey legs, a whole bunch of people.

- LOWER THIRD: "Agnes T. Amundsen, amateur horticulturalist"

The Gardener holds the wreckage of her flowerpots.

GARDENER

I don't know what was worse, the
aliens or the massive disruptions by
the federal authorities, which *our*
tax dollars pay for -

ZOE

It was a lot of responsibility. So we
came up with a plan.

BEN

Police car -

CHARLIE

- antennas -

BRIDGET

- gun -

ZOE

- alien drone pod -

DOUG

(holding his arrow)

- wooden weapons -

BRIDGET

- charred bones -

QUINN

- forsooth.

A pause.

QUINN (cont'd)

(to camera)

Hey, mom and dad!

BRIDGET

Those things -

DOUG

(hamming it up)

- dead eyes, like a doll's eyes -

ZOE

Nuts. So nuts.

BEN

Crazy.

- LOWER THIRD: "Kit Harington, Young Hollywood Award Winner"

KIT HARINGTON
An absolutely mental situation.

GARDENER
The US spends more money on its
military than the next eleven
countries combined -

DOUG
NGL we high key wanted these guys to
go -

QUINN
- [BEEP] themselves, by Jove, back to
the foul, brimstone-soaked hell that
gave them birth!

ZOE
(self-effacing)
It wasn't a big deal.

BEN
Zoe saved the world.

BRIDGET
Zoe saved the world.

DOUG
Zoe saved the world.

Zoe fights a smile, and admits -

ZOE
... I saved the world.

MUSIC BUILDS into -

ROLL CREDITS

POST CREDITS:

EXT. ROAD TO MILITARY BASE - DAY

A long, straight road cuts between fields. In the distance
is an imposing military building.

A sleek black car cuts through.

INT. MILITARY BASE - CORRIDOR - DAY

Zoe follows Cook down a long hallway in a secure military
compound. Cook turns and raises an eyebrow.

COMMANDER COOK
You think you're ready for this?

ZOE
Not to sound cocky, but I did blow up
an alien invasion.

INT. MILITARY BASE - CATWALK - CONTINUOUS

They come out onto a catwalk over a concrete warehouse.
Scientists in lab coats are running diagnostics on the Alien
Captive, still, somehow, locked in the medieval pillory.

ZOE
(frowning)
We ... *are* the good guys, right?

Cook shrugs and keeps walking.

INT. MILITARY BASE - ELEVATOR - DAY

Cook hits a button and the elevator doors open. Zoe steps
in. Cook pauses in the hallway.

ZOE
So ... when does my training begin?

Cook smiles.

COMMANDER COOK
It already has.

She hits another button and the doors close, sealing Zoe
from sight.

THE END