

# OUR KIND II: MISTRESS LAUREL SEAMCHECKER EXPLAINS IT ALL AT YOU

by Goldwyn of Britain

characters (in order of appearance)

Mistress Laurel Seamchecker

Histrionica

Queen Lowbodice

Lady Vitriola

Maven O'Fun

Cupcake Gaolbait

Bruno duh Barbarian

squire Butch

squire Studly

Duke Paragon the Perfect

*(Laurel enters, shows off her garb, critiques the audience, jotting down notes in her notepad, then finally condescends to address the audience.)*

**LAUREL:** *(beaming a false smile)* Good morning, class.

*(She waits for a response. Whether she gets a "Good morning, Mistress Laurel" or not . . .)*

And good morning, classless. I am Mistress Laurel Seamchecker, and I'm going to tell you everything you always wanted to know about the Order of the Laurel but didn't have the guts to ask. First and foremost, no member of the Order of the Laurel has ever made a mistake. We only pretend to so the rest of you won't feel bad. While the rest of the Society is intent upon recreating the Middle Ages, we take that idea one step further: we want to recreate the Society - not as it is, but as it should be. Since our first name is "society," that means you have to learn to get along with other people, even if you can't stand them. For example . . .

*(Histrionica enters wearing a herald's baldric.)*

**HISTRIONICA:** Her Majesty, Queen Lowbodice!

*(Lowbodice sweeps in, giving the Windsor Wave, followed by Vitriola. Laurel immediately slaps a huge grin onto her face and curtseys to the exact point she deems appropriate.)*

**LAUREL:** *(gushing false enthusiasm)* Your Majesty!

**LOWBODICE:** Oh, get up, Laurel.

*(Laurel rises.)*

**LAUREL:** I would prefer it if you use my title, your Majesty. After all, I use yours.

**LOWBODICE:** You didn't used to.

**LAUREL:** You didn't have one.

**LOWBODICE:** Will you still like me when I'm off the throne?

**LAUREL:** Survive your reign, and then we'll discuss it.

**LOWBODICE:** Why, I do believe you're jealous!

**LAUREL:** Jealous? Nonsense! Kings and Queens may come and go, but a Peerage is forever!

**VITRIOLA:** 'Til they find a cure.

**LOWBODICE:** Have you met my chief lady-in-waiting, Lady Vitriola?

**LAUREL:** *(stiffly)* I don't recall. Have we met, Lady?

**VITRIOLA:** I doubt it. I don't go into those kind of places.

*(Laurel's nostrils flare. She is just about to return fire when Lowbodice forestalls her.)*

**LOWBODICE:** And, of course, you know our herald, Histrionica.

*(Laurel ignores Histrionica.)*

**HISTRIONICA:** *(babbling)* Oh, yes, of course. Why, everyone knows Mistress Laurel! I can't tell you what a thrill it gives me just to be in the same room - nay, Kingdom! - as you.

**VITRIOLA:** 'Scuse me while I get a pair of hip boots.

**LOWBODICE:** All right, Histrionica. That's enough.

**HISTRIONICA:** *(continuing)* I've admired you from afar for so long . . . and now I'm actually standing right next to you! Wow!

**LOWBODICE:** Histrionica.

**HISTRIONICA:** *(continuing)* There simply aren't words to describe how I feel!

**VITRIOLA:** *(sotto voce)* But I'm sure you'll try.

**HISTRIONICA:** *(continuing)* You have always seemed to me the very embodiment of the wisdom and courtesy of the Society.

**LOWBODICE and  
VITRIOLA:** *(to each other, mimicking what they know is to come)* "Of course. I'm a Laurel."

*(They touch their forefingers to their chins and curtsey.)*

**LAUREL:** Of course. I'm a Laurel.

*(Histrionica kneels at Laurel's feet.)*

**HISTRIONICA:** *(continuing)* Oh, please teach me how to do the things you do! I'll do anything. All I want is to be your apprentice . . . your servant . . . your slave!

**LAUREL:** *(to the audience)* Pay attention.

**HISTRIONICA:** *(continuing)* I only hope I can be half as wonderful as you, when I get to be your age.

*(Lowbodice and Vitriola take a step backward, so as not to be caught in the fallout.)*

**LAUREL:** *(cold as a glacier)* Not on your best decade.

*(Laurel is about to attack Histrionica, but Lowbodice stops her.)*

**LOWBODICE:** Now, now. You know that heralds are inviolate.

**LAUREL:** Violet. Isn't that a combination of black and blue?

*(Histrionica grovels.)*

**HISTRIONICA:** Oh, please, Mistress Laurel. If I said anything to offend you, I would rather my tongue be ripped from my mouth and served at a banquet than to cause you any grief.

**VITRIOLA:** Sounds like fun.

**HISTRIONICA:** Forgive me, Your Laurelness. Oh, please, forgive me.

*(She kisses the hem of Laurel's skirt.)*

**LAUREL:** Oh, stop grovelling. You're not important enough for anyone to care. Besides, you're getting herald goo all over my garb.

**LOWBODICE:** Leave us, Histrionica.

**HISTRIONICA:** Yes, your Majesty. Thank you, your Majesty. Anything you say, your Majesty.

*(She rises and scuttles out, bowing all the way.)*

**LAUREL:** You've trained her well.

**LOWBODICE:** It's nothing. You have to know how to handle people.

**VITRIOLA:** The voice of experience.

**LOWBODICE:** *(with a sigh)* It's not easy being the fount and source of all honour for the Kingdom . . .

*(Laurel and Vitriola gag.)*

. . . but being Queen does have its "perks."

**LAUREL:** Such as?

**LOWBODICE:** *(favouring her with a nasty-sweet smile)* Oh, that's right. You wouldn't know, would you? Well, one of the "perks" is that I get told all the interesting secrets of the Kingdom.

**LAUREL:** Oh? Such as?

**LOWBODICE:** Among other things, I was taught the Secret Laurel's Handshake.

**LAUREL:** *(aghast)* No!

**LOWBODICE:** Would I lie?

**VITRIOLA:** With whom?

**LAUREL:** Prove it!

*(They shake hands. While their right hands are clasped, each one uses her left hand to turn the other's cuff back and check her seams. Suddenly Laurel breaks away, distraught.)*

Our secrets, revealed! Oh, how did a woman like you ever get to be Queen?

**LOWBODICE:** The usual way. I found a willing fighter, closed my eyes, and thought of the Crown.

**VITRIOLA:** So did he.

**LOWBODICE:** Of course, now that I'm Queen, I'm going to have to drop the rest of my name.

**LAUREL:** "Crowncraver?"

**LOWBODICE:** Yes. Looks like I'll be changing my name. Again. I was thinking of "Gregorovna" . . . *(for Golden Stag production, change to "ni Roane" -- in joke)*

*(Histrionica runs in and throws herself at Lowbodice's feet.)*

**HISTRIONICA:** No, your Majesty! Please! Anything but that! You have no idea how it screws up our records!

**LOWBODICE:** *(sweetly)* Shall we discuss it, monarch to peasant?

*(Lowbodice raises her up, takes her by the ear, and marches her out.)*

- VITRIOLA:** *(to Laurel, looking after Lowbodice)* How long until the Ides of March?
- LOWBODICE:** *(offstage)* I heard that!
- LAUREL:** Some people take things so personally.  
*(Lowbodice pokes her head back in.)*
- LOWBODICE:** I do not!  
*(She exits.)*
- VITRIOLA:** I wonder if we could pay the Civil War group to take her off our hands.
- LAUREL:** You don't like her?
- VITRIOLA:** Let me just say that I've had warts I've been fonder of.
- LAUREL:** If you don't like her, why are you her lady-in-waiting?
- VITRIOLA:** If I walk behind her, I don't have to bow.
- LOWBODICE:** *(calling from offstage)* Vitriola, are you coming?
- LAUREL:** She has a one-track mind.
- VITRIOLA:** Narrow gauge.  
*(She exits.)*
- LAUREL:** *(to the audience)* As I was saying, it takes all kinds to make a world. Unfortunately, some of those kinds find their way into the Society *(sigh)*, no matter how we hide.  
  
*(Maven bounds in, full of enthusiasm. She is wearing a tee shirt, Bermuda shorts, baseball hat, etc., and carries a pennon with the letters S.C.A. on it and a six-pack of Diet Coke.)*
- MAVEN:** Hi-ho, campers! It's party time! Maven O'Fun here, there, and ev'rywhere! Come on, all you stick-jocks-in-the-mud, the day is young and the Knights are getting older! Time to party-party-party!
- LAUREL:** See here, Maven, the S.C.A. is not an ongoing party.
- MAVEN:** Depends on who you hang out with.
- LAUREL:** We are trying for some serious scholarship here. Take me, for instance . . .
- MAVEN:** Why?

- LAUREL:** Because I am a perfect example of historical research and re-creation.
- MAVEN:** I'm more interested in recreation. Besides, you always look so uncomfortable in those funny clothes.
- LAUREL:** "Funny clothes?" "Funny clothes!" This from a person who's in the S.C.A.!
- MAVEN:** Hey, I've done my research. Historically, clothing is divided into three periods: bearskins, funny clothes, and modern.
- LAUREL:** But you should make some sort of effort . . .
- MAVEN:** You don't have to. Take fighters, for instance. You're not a real anachronist unless you wear plastic armour.
- LAUREL:** Splendid example. How do you expect f . . . f . . . "them" . . . to put two pieces of fabric together, when they can't even manage it with brain cells?
- MAVEN:** But I gotta admit, I do enjoy being asked if I'm in a play. Hey, maybe someday I'll get a Laurel for that, huh?
- LAUREL:** A Laurel? For show business? Don't be vulgar.
- MAVEN:** It was just a thought.
- LAUREL:** Perish the thought.
- MAVEN:** Gee, I'd love to hang around, but me an' a couple of other Trekkies are getting together to play D & D and talk computers. Grab a brewski and come on.
- LAUREL:** You can't mix centuries like that!
- MAVEN:** Sure I can! "Creative" is our middle name!
- (She exits.)*
- LAUREL:** *(covering up)* Must be a different branch of the family. Well, at least she wasn't wearing a bunny-fur bikini.
- (Cupcake enters, wearing a bunny-fur bikini and weapons.)*
- CUPCAKE:** Good morrow, Mistress.
- LAUREL:** *(returning the greeting automatically)* Good . . . *(sees her)* . . . God! Cupcake Gaolbait, the last time I saw you, you were decently - or, at least, respectably - clad. What in the name of Saint Sartorius happened to you?
- CUPCAKE:** I have a new lord.
- LAUREL:** Who could have done such a horrible thing to such a sweet, innocent child?

**CUPCAKE:** Bruno duh Barbarian.

**LAUREL:** *(of course)* Bruno the Barbarian.

**CUPCAKE:** No, no. Not "the." "Duh." It's how he spells it.

*(Vitriola enters.)*

**LAUREL:** Isn't he the one who wears the sharkskin loincloth?

**CUPCAKE:** Not all the time.

**VITRIOLA:** Talking about Bruno?

**CUPCAKE:** Uh-huh.

**VITRIOLA:** What a hunk of beef.

**LAUREL:** Please! Let us be civilized. Let us not judge people by the way they look, but by their clothes - their minds!

**VITRIOLA:** I was referring to his mind.

**CUPCAKE:** Now, that's not fair! He's very smart.

**VITRIOLA:** Really? Tell me this, Cupcake. Has he ever had a long talk with you?

*(Cupcake thinks for a moment, then holds her fingers up.)*

**CUPCAKE:** This long.

**VITRIOLA:** I rest my case. Shallow as a saucer.

**CUPCAKE:** From one who's had a lot of experience with saucers.

**VITRIOLA:** Listen, honey. You're no great prize, either. If it wasn't for all the skin you show, you could never get a man. You have no wit, no charm, no sense of humour, no poise, no style, and precious little experience. Let's face it, honey. In the Disneyland of love, you're an "A" ticket ride.

**CUPCAKE:** Well, I never!

**VITRIOLA:** It shows.

*(Bruno enters. He wears a loincloth and is built like a bodybuilder.)*

**BRUNO:** It shows? Where?

*(He begins to check himself, looking for where "it shows.")*

**CUPCAKE:** Here. Let me help.

*(She goes to him. They check each other to see if anything shows.)*

**VITRIOLA:** Two of a kind.

**LAUREL:** Yes. The only problem is, if we leave them alone, they'll make more. Cupcake . . . dear . . . could we have a word with you?

**CUPCAKE:** *(hesitant)* Both of you?

**LAUREL:** Don't be afraid. We don't bite.

**VITRIOLA:** Speak for yourself.

**CUPCAKE:** But I'm busy.

**VITRIOLA:** Put your hormones in neutral and get your . . . bunny . . . over here.

*(Reluctantly, Cupcake leaves Bruno and goes to them. He continues to search.)*

**CUPCAKE:** Okay, I'm here. What word did you want to have?

**VITRIOLA:** Chastity.

**CUPCAKE:** What does that mean?

**VITRIOLA:** I was afraid of that. Come on. I'll explain it to you - in words of one syllable.

*(She takes Cupcake off. Bruno, by now, is playing with his sword in a most obscene fashion.)*

**LAUREL:** *(to the audience)* Look at him, my lords and ladies. An evolutionary dead-end; but then, what else could you expect from someone whose middle name is "duh"? *(to him)* Bruno - *(sees him)* - ohhhhh!

**BRUNO:** *(still playing)* What?

**LAUREL:** *(staring)* Would you please stop doing that? It's very distracting - I mean rude!

**BRUNO:** Okay.

*(He stops.)*

**LAUREL:** Bruno, I'd like to talk to you.

*(Bruno comes to her and stands there silent for a few moments. Laurel's impatience grows.)*

**BRUNO:** So? Talk.

**LAUREL:** You are a barbarian.

**BRUNO:** Everybody says that to me.

*(He twitches his pectorals.)*

**LAUREL:** *(mesmerized)* Of course. *(recovering herself)* What I meant to say was, which type of "barbarian" are you? Celtic? Viking? Mongol? *(to the audience)* Many of the so-called "barbarian" cultures can be quite fascinating. *(to Bruno)* What is your persona?

**BRUNO:** Huh?

**LAUREL:** *(pronouncing it slowly and carefully)* Per-so-na.

**BRUNO:** What's that?

**LAUREL:** It's who and what we are. Who - or, in your case, a better word might be - what are you?

**BRUNO:** Bruno. Barbarian.

**LAUREL:** I know you're a barbarian, but what kind of barbarian are you?

**BRUNO:** Huh? I dunno. Duh Bruno kind, I guess.

**LAUREL:** The basic kind. Well, even that kind had one virtue.

**BRUNO:** *(as interested as his limited intellect will allow)* Yeah? What?

**LAUREL:** They all died out.

*(She turns to leave. Bruno is dejected. Laurel stops.)*

Oh. Bruno?

**BRUNO:** *(without looking up)* Yeah?

**LAUREL:** "Persona" is related to the word "personality." Try to develop one.

*(She exits. Bruno begins to check himself again.)*

**BRUNO:** I know it's around here, somewhere.

**HISTRIONICA:** *(offstage)* His Grace, Duke Paragon the Perfect!

*(Butch and Studly enter, carrying flashlights, pointed offstage. To trumpets, if available, Paragon strides in, leading with outthrust chin and chest. The squires keep the flashlights trained on him. He shines, he gleams, he damn near glows in the dark.)*

**PARAGON:** Ah, Bruno, my fine fellow!

**BRUNO:** Yo, Dook!

**PARAGON:** Come, greet me with the Secret Fighters' Handshake!

*(They rush together, clasping hands and ramming shoulders together. They break apart.)*

Stout fellow!

**BRUNO:** *(a bit dazed)* Where?

**PARAGON:** Attend me, squires.

*(They brush, polish, etc.)*

The time has come for us to speak of butch and studly things! Of swords and shields and battles won, and fallacies of Kings!

*(The four of them cluster around, making gestures and muttering. Occasionally, words such as "shield wall" and "had 'em surrounded" can be heard. Laurel enters and listens to them for a moment.)*

**LAUREL:** *(to the audience)* Ah, the sounds of civilization. How I miss them.

*(The quartet breaks apart.)*

**BRUNO:** Where am Cupcake?

**LAUREL:** *(pointing offstage)* She's over there, talking with a charming Cavalier.

**BRUNO:** What!?! Bruno fix him. Bruno pound! Bruno hit! Bruno --

**LAUREL:** Talk too much. Sic 'em.

*(Bruno bellows and runs off.)*

So much for macho the clown.

**PARAGON:** Mistress Laurel, may I present my two squires?

**LAUREL:** *(sigh)* If you must.

- PARAGON:** Squire Butch . . .
- (Butch steps forward and bows.)*
- . . . and squire Studly.
- (Studly shakes Laurel's hand.)*
- LAUREL:** Why do you need two squires?
- PARAGON:** Oh, I have lots of squires. These are just the two who fit on the roof rack.
- LAUREL:** Now I understand. Royal Peers form their own households because, after six months on the throne, they forget how to dress themselves.
- PARAGON:** Don't start with me, woman . . .
- LAUREL:** Ooh, a threat. What, afraid of poor little me?
- BUTCH and  
STUDLY:** A Duke fears nothing!
- LAUREL:** Except his Duchess.
- PARAGON:** Ha! That's as likely as someone turning down a Laurel!
- LAUREL:** Bite your face. No-one in their right mind refuses a Laurel.
- PARAGON:** Well, some people do turn it down.
- LAUREL:** Which just proves that they're not in their right mind . . . which means it wasn't really offered in the first place.
- PARAGON:** *(smiling)* I'm glad to hear you say that. *(calling offstage)* Now!
- (Histrionica enters.)*
- HISTRIONICA:** Oyez! Oy vey! All attend the Court of Queen Lowbodice!
- (The others enter. Lowbodice stands at UC, the others cluster around.)*
- Aw, come on, people! Leave a center aisle!
- (The crowd parts.)*
- Her Majesty summons Mistress Laurel Seamchecker to present . . .
- LOWBODICE:** And abase.

- HISTRIONICA:** . . . herself before the throne.  
*(Laurel comes forward and kneels facing the audience.)*
- LOWBODICE:** God, I love being Queen!
- HISTRIONICA:** *(feeding Lowbodice her lines)* Mistress Laurel Seamchecker . . .
- LOWBODICE:** To whom it may concern . . .
- HISTRIONICA:** . . . right mindful of the great service you have given this Kingdom . . .
- LOWBODICE:** . . . because of your behaviour . . .
- HISTRIONICA:** . . . in the area of instruction . . .
- LOWBODICE:** . . . in browbeating newcomers . . .
- HISTRIONICA:** . . . in the fine arts of courtesy . . .
- LOWBODICE:** . . . into what you believe to be "proper thought" . . .
- HISTRIONICA:** . . . it is our pleasure . . .
- LOWBODICE:** . . . it is His Majesty's decision . . .
- HISTRIONICA:** . . . to admit you to the right noble order -
- LOWBODICE:** *(snapping at Histrionica)* I know the rest of it! *(to Laurel)* . . . to give you the bird.
- LAUREL:** Oh!
- LOWBODICE:** Are you willing to accept this honour from Our hands?
- VITRIOLA:** Without knowing where they've been?
- LAUREL:** Your Majesty, I am not worthy . . .
- all:** "No-one in their right mind . . ."
- LAUREL:** Then, away with false modesty! Of course I'll accept!
- LOWBODICE:** All right, folks. Let her have it!  
*(She is pelted with rubber chickens. Finally, beaming, she stands.)*
- LAUREL:** I . . . I don't know what to say . . .

**VITRIOLA:** History!

**LAUREL:** . . . except for the obvious.

**all:** (*expectantly*) Yes?

**LAUREL:** (*to the audience*) Class dismissed.

*(Butch and Studly come forward. Each one picks up a rubber chicken and hands it to Laurel. Then they turn to the audience, bow, and exit. Histrionica and Paragon come forward and do the same, then Maven, then Cupcake and Bruno, then Lowbodice and Vitriola. Finally, Laurel is left alone on stage with her arms full of rubber chickens.)*

I'd like to thank the Academy . . . and my momma and poppa . . . and all you little people who make this possible. I just have one thing to say . . . You like me! You really like me!  
*(She exits.)*

*finis MISTRESS LAUREL SEAMCHECKER EXPLAINS IT ALL AT YOU*