

**Donnie Q, Knight of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

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For N&JD

Behavior that's admired is the path to power.  
*Beowulf*

### **Synopsis**

Third grade Donnie Q fashions himself a knight, imagining a world in which he bravely saves his hard-working, single mother. But as powerful as his imagination is, reality overwhelms his ventures. Gwen, his mother, seeks to maintain a happy family yet struggles to support her little family. An unhealthy on-again/off-again relationship with her boyfriend Caz doesn't help as he tries to 'normalize' Donnie. Donnie decides to enlist the help of his closest friend, Panda, in his knightly quest. Panda, however, wants nothing more than to prove that girls are equal to boys by winning a place on the local boys' baseball team. As Donnie's jousting humorously complicates Panda's ball practice, Frederick, a local bully and baseball player, seriously irritates the both of them. Their successive attempts to overcome both bullies seem increasingly futile, until Donnie's awkward crusade against oppression suddenly upsets the tenuous balance of everyone's worlds. He helps, in a slightly hilarious and slightly sad way, to reach a promising future for them all. Except maybe Frederick.

### **Production Note**

The play moves between Donnie's reality and imagination. Ideally, as the characters move into Donnie's imagination, they transform immediately into the suggested mythic creatures. Have fun with the transformations (Puppets? Projections? Shadows?), because Donnie does.

As for Donnie's reality, a few props suggest a whole world which lets us interact with the play in the way Donnie interacts with his world.

## Characters

<b>Donnie Q</b>	Nine year old boy
<b>Frederick</b>	Eleven year old boy
<b>Panda</b>	Donnie's friend, a ten year old girl
<b>Gwen</b>	Donnie's mother, late 20's
<b>Caz</b>	Gwen's boyfriend, mid-30's

## Scenes

<b>Scene</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Time</b>
PROLOGUE	<i>Donnie's Imagination</i>	Sat Afternoon
SCENE 1	Park	Sat Afternoon
SCENE 2	Home	Sat evening
SCENE 2A	<i>Donnie's Imagination</i>	Sat evening
SCENE 3	Panda's Yard	Weds afternoon
SCENE 4	Home	Weds evening
SCENE 4A	<i>Donnie's Imagination</i>	Weds night
SCENE 5	Home	Fri morning
SCENE 6	Baseball Park	Fri afternoon
SCENE 7	Home	Fri evening
SCENE 8	Sidewalk	Fri evening
SCENE 9	Sidewalk	Fri evening
EPILOGUE	<i>Donnie's Imagination</i>	Fri evening

## Script Note

An ellipsis “...” indicates an unspoken, but important, moment for a character.

An ellipsis at the end of a line of dialogue indicates a character doesn't complete the thought.

An m-dash “–” at the end of a line of dialogue indicates that the next speaker cuts off the character's speech.

**PROLOGUE: Donnie's imagination**

*Donnie enters, slicing the air with his cardboard sword.*

**DONNIE** *(Sing-songy)*

Zing-zing-zing. I come for you, Beastie!

*Donnie attacks, defeating his imagined foe.*

Woo! People cheer the Bravery Knight. They cheer his bravery 'cause he beat that big beastie that terrored everyone. And the cheers cheer him. But he cannot stop. He is questing. The Bravery Knight must save Rosco, his friendliest horse!

*(Brandishes his sword)* Zing-zing! Some monster beast must of stoled Rosco. But the fear-nothing knight doesn't know scared. I will find you, Rosco, my best of all friend.

*'Suddenly' spies an imagined figure and attacks.*

Ah-ha! Zing-zing-zing. The Bravery Knight attacks a rotten giant. Have you stoled my horse, rotten giant? Zing-zing-zing. Hear my sword sing? Zing-zing! *(He fells the giant)*. See? The Bravery Knight kills another rotten beastie.

*Donnie discovers 'Rosco,' an old, well-used Big Wheel 'steed.' It should look like he's had it a long time and he doesn't quite fit on it anymore.*

And Rosco! I found you, Rosco. *(Whinnies like a horse.)* You poor little horse. Did the rotten giant almost ate you? Calm down, my friendly friend. I will never let you get hurt again. Together we will smash all naughty beasties. We ride!

*Donnie mounts and rides his 'steed.'*

Listen up, monster beasts. You won't keep hurting my family, hear me? You stoled my Lord of the Castle, but I'll protect my Lady of the Castle. Yes, me, Donnie Q, Knight of the Bravery.

*(Improvised operatic singing)*

You will be scared, you will be all shaky,

I am here to kill the beasties that are really bad to families.

*(Speaks)*

Zing-zing-zing. Hear my sword sing?

I come for you now.

*Thumping noises, off. (Frederick slams a baseball into his baseball glove.)*

Whoa, Rosco. Wait.

*A large shadow (Frederick) appears, ideally monster-sized. A massive hand (baseball glove) catches an object (baseball). The object thumps (as it hits the glove).*

See that? (*Quietly hiding*) Something evil is right there, hiding. Shhh, my friendly friend.

*Frederick tosses and catches the ball in multiple ways. Thump. Thump.*

(*Whispering*) I see you, Ogre. I see you. You cannot hide from my blazing eyes.

*Frederick tosses the ball so far, it lands near Donnie with a thud. Donnie leaps back as if avoiding getting hit.*

(*Whispering*) You missed me, Ogre. Hee hee hee.

*Frederick searches for the ball, moving closer towards Donnie.*

**SHADOW/FREDERICK**

Hey. (*Beat*) Hey!

*Rosco shivers.*

**DONNIE**

Easy, Rosco. Ogre's are abominable, but not for a Bravery Knight.

**SHADOW/FREDERICK**

Toss that back here.

**DONNIE**

(*Whispering*) Closer, Abominable Ogre, closer. Show yourself to me.

**SHADOW/FREDERICK** (*Moving closer.*)

What's your problem, dumhead? Toss that back to me!

*Donnie makes Rosco whinnying sounds.*

**DONNIE**

Whoa, Rosco, whoa. The bigger an ogre roars, the more scareder he is.

**SHADOW/FREDERICK**

Hey! Pick the ball up already!

**SCENE 1**

*A park. Afternoon. The 'shadow' Frederick steps out of Donnie's imagination into reality.*

**DONNIE** (*trumpets loudly*)  
Toot-tee-toot-toot-too! Ride, Rosco, ride!

**FREDERICK**  
Oh. Dinky boy.

**DONNIE**  
Yes. Me! Run away in fear, Abominable Ogre. Zing-zing-zing!

*Donnie attacks Frederick as fiercely as a small kid and a cardboard sword allows.*

**FREDERICK**  
You're so weird, kid.

*Frederick stands, watching, as Donnie 'attacks.'*

**DONNIE** (*Sings.*)  
I swing my sword at you.  
I zing my sword at you.  
I sing my song at you.

*Frederick laughs.*

**FREDERICK**  
Ya gotta hit harder than that, kid.

*Donnie whacks at him.*

**DONNIE**  
Zing-zing-zing.

**FREDERICK**  
Harder.

**DONNIE**  
I got you.

**FREDERICK**  
Hit me harder!

**DONNIE**  
I'll do it, Abominable Ogre!

**FREDERICK**  
Come on! Kill! Kill! Kill!

*Donnie stabs, stabs, stabs.*

**DONNIE** (*Simultaneous with Frederick*)  
Stab! Stab! Stab!

*Beat, as Frederick enjoys the moment.*

**FREDERICK**  
Like that. Yeah, like that, kid. Nice.

**DONNIE** (*A little surprised, a little excited*)  
You're beat?

**FREDERICK**  
Oh, sure, pipsqueak, it almost kinda hurt.

**DONNIE** (*Operatic climax.*)  
Ta ta daDA! The Bravery—

*Frederick POKES Donnie.*

Hey.

*Frederick POKES Donnie harder.*

Ow!

*Frederick PUSHES Donnie.*

**FREDERICK**  
Now where's my ball, loser?

*Frederick grabs Donnie hard. Panda enters, holding the ball and her own baseball bat.*

**PANDA**  
You mean this, Frederick?

**DONNIE**  
Squire Panda!

**FREDERICK**  
Give me that.

**PANDA**

You doing okay, Donnie Q?

**FREDERICK**

Give me my ball now, girl!

*Frederick pushes Donnie out of the way.*

**PANDA**

Catch, Frederick!

**FREDERICK**

Right, like girls can even—

*Panda throws. Whump! Into the glove. Frederick winces, despite himself.*

**PANDA**

Perfect pitch!

**DONNIE** *(Operatic climax.)*

Ta ta daDA! Be afraid, Og—

**FREDERICK**

Roar.

*Frederick snatches Donnie's sword and mangles it.*

**DONNIE**

Ah! My sword.

*Frederick throws it at Donnie.*

**PANDA**

Leave the kid alone.

**FREDERICK**

Weirdos.

*Frederick kicks over the big wheel and leaves.*

**DONNIE** *(Quietly.)*

Rosco.

**PANDA**

Hey, Donnie, you hurt or anything?



*Donnie stands, dejected.*

I mean, Sir Knight? You okay?

*Donnie drags the big wheel behind him. He pick up his broken sword and exits.*

**PANDA**

Hey, Donnie, er, uh, Sir, don't let that Frederick ogre ... Ack. (*Swings bat towards Frederick's exit.*) Just don't let him!

*She exits.*

**SCENE 2**

*Home. Donnie sits quietly in the dark, an open book on his lap.*

**GWEN** (*Off*)

Hon? Sorry I'm late. I have no idea what happened to Cassius. Donnie?

*Gwen enters.*

Donnie? I'm sorry I'm late. Did you eat something yet? I texted Cassius, but ...

*Gwen nearly steps on Donnie.*

Donnie! You startled me. Why're you sitting in the dark like that, hon? Are you tracking an evil beast or something?

*Silence.*

Hon? What's wrong?

*Donnie shrugs.*

Maybe if you eat something you'll feel better, and we can read—

*Donnie closes the book and drops it.*

**DONNIE** (*near tears*)

I was...defeated. Defeated, Mom.

**GWEN**

Oh. Oh, my little hero.

*Gwen hugs him.*

**DONNIE**

He broke my sword, Mom.

**GWEN**

Oh, hon. You need to stay far away from those boys that tease you.

**DONNIE** *(sings softly.)*

My sword was my most precious friend.

**GWEN**

We can fix your sword.

*Donnie sighs.*

Aw, hon. *(Beat.)* Hey. Think about *Siegfried*.

**DONNIE**

His swords broke.

**GWEN**

Exactly. All of Siegfried's swords broke, right? Not one sword was strong enough for him.

**DONNIE**

That isn't help.

**GWEN**

Hon. Siegfried. The warrior without a Dad. But that didn't make him sad. And when his swords broke, he made the greatest blade in just one stroke. *(Sings.)* Nothung.

*Donnie is silent.*

You like that story, right?

**DONNIE** *(Sings sadly.)*

My sword, my sword.

**GWEN**

Make a new sword, hon. Like Siegfried.

**DONNIE** *(Sings sadly.)*

My sword, my sword.

**GWEN**

Donnie, come here. Come. (*Gwen produces a small book.*) I found a new story for you. (*Beat.*) You ready to hear it? (*Beat.*) A certain Knight grew old, his hair fell off, and he became bald—

*Gwen's phone dings.*

Sorry.

*She's dismayed by the text message.*

**DONNIE**

Mom?

**GWEN**

Oh, sorry. (*Remembering her place*) He grew bald... Okay. To hide the imperfection the knight wore a periwig.

**DONNIE**

A peri-? A what?

**GWEN**

Fake hair.

**DONNIE**

Oh.

**GWEN**

Now he was out hunting with his friends—

**DONNIE**

Knights?

**GWEN**

Well, uh, friends. Suddenly, a big wind blew off the periwig. And there was his shiny, bald head. His friends couldn't help but laugh—

**DONNIE**

Like an Abominable Ogre that wants to hurt.

**GWEN**

Ah, but the knight laughed as loud as anybody, saying, "How could I keep strange hair on my head, when my own hair didn't even want to stay?"

*Beat.*

Nice story, huh?

*Donnie takes the small book and inspects it.*

**DONNIE**

Where's the beastie?

**GWEN**

There's no beastie.

**DONNIE**

But, but Knights always defeat beasts in the stories.

**GWEN**

Hon. When everyone laughed, the knight laughed loudest. You see? He didn't let it bother him. He didn't let it *defeat* him.

**DONNIE** *(Not understanding.)*

...

**GWEN**

Courage means facing defeat without losing heart. Be the first to laugh, Donnie. Don't let 'defeat' defeat you.

**DONNIE** *(Getting it.)*

Oh. Oh! Like, 'I laugh at you, monster beasties.' Like that?

**GWEN**

I like it when you're having fun.

**DONNIE** *(Laughs)*

Like, 'let them attack. I'll stab them all with my fiercest laugh. *(Laughs)* And knock them all dead, dead, dead.' Like that?

**GWEN**

Kind of. Just, please—

**DONNIE**

I need my awesome blade back to life so I can slice up all the evil beasts real good so they don't defeat me. *(Laughs. A sudden thought.)* Siegfried.

*Donnie digs out a book.*

**GWEN**

Sing it, my little hero.

**DONNIE** (*Sings*)

Hohei! Hohei! Hoho!

**GWEN**

I love when you sing the Siegfried opera music!

**BOTH**

Hohei!

*Donnie points to a place in the Siegfried book.*

**DONNIE** (*A realization.*)

I didn't name it.

**GWEN**

What's that, my lovely knight?

**DONNIE**

My sword. I didn't give my sword a name. See?

*Points to the book.*

**GWEN**

Of course. Like Siegfried named his *Nothung*.

**DONNIE**

The name makes real power, right? I will make my own *Nothing*.

**GWEN** (*laughing*)

Hon. Siegfried's sword is *Nothung*.

**DONNIE**

Yeah. A great, big *Nothing*, the Blue Blade.

**GWEN**

Okay, hon. Make it however you like. Now let's get some food in you, my little hero.

**DONNIE**

I vow, my lady, you will always be safe with me forever.

*Donnie strikes a pose with the broken sword.*

**GWEN**

Just not too violent, please.

*Gwen's phone dings again. She is again dismayed.*

**DONNIE** (*Sings.*)

I will kill the Despicable Dragon for you.  
I will smash that nasty beast.  
Zing-zing.

**GWEN**

Donnie, please, gently.

**DONNIE** (*Sings.*)

Yes, my fair lady. Do you want me to bring you that dragon's tail?

**GWEN**

Your lady, here, wishes you to be a gentler knight.

**DONNIE**

For you, my lady, I will be the grandest Knight.

**GWEN**

Kind.

**DONNIE** (*Sings.*)

Kind to all the ladies.

**GWEN**

Gentle.

**DONNIE** (*Sings.*)

To all animals. Mostly horses.

**GWEN**

Chivalrous.

**DONNIE** (*Sings.*)

Shif...Shevrous...Shovelrust.

**GWEN** (*Laughs a little.*)

Chivalrous.

**DONNIE** (*Sings.*)

Like that. (*Big note.*) And Brave.

**GWEN**

I love it, my little operatic hero. (*Realizes*) Oh, oh, I have a surprise for you, Donnie. I can't believe I forgot.

*Gwen hands him an envelope.*

**DONNIE**

A sparkling Blue Blade Nothing?

*Donnie opens it.*

**GWEN**

Opera tickets.

*Donnie hits an operatic note.*

For the *Siegfried* opera this Friday.

**DONNIE**

I get to go see it? Actually, truly see *Siegfried*?

**GWEN**

Yep. You're growing up, my little hero. *Siegfried* will be right there on stage, live.

**DONNIE**

The not ever scared warrior. Yay, Mom. Mom!

*Donnie hugs her.*

**GWEN**

Friday night. *Siegfried's* opera! Not just the story, but the true to life *Siegfried* opera.

*Donnie acts the part of a singing Siegfried.*

**DONNIE**

Hohei! Hohei! Hoho!

**GWEN**

We'll stick them right here, so we don't forget.

*Gwen sticks them in a flower pot or such.*

**DONNIE**

Like, like the sword in the stone.

**GWEN**

Of course. And only the most chivalrous of knights will be able to pull those tickets out on Friday.

**DONNIE**

You are the most kindest lady of any kingdom ever.

*Donnie hugs her.*

**CAZ (Off.)**

Rock on, rock on, sweet babe of mine.  
Rock on, rock on, your love is here!

**DONNIE (warning)**

Oh. I hear the Dragon.

**GWEN**

Donnie, Cassius is not a dragon.

**DONNIE**

He snores like one.

*Gwen inadvertently laughs.*

Yes. Laugh. Laugh, my lady. *(Donnie laughs intentionally.)* We can defeat at him when we laugh! *(Donnie laughs.)*

**CAZ (Off.)**

Hey Gwen. Babe!

**GWEN**

Donnie, be nice. And eat your food.

**DONNIE**

But I don't like when he hurts you.

**GWEN (To Donnie)**

Cassius—

**DONNIE**

Hurts you sometimes.

**GWEN**

...

**CAZ (Off.)**

Babe!

**GWEN**

Cassius is ... good for us, hon. For me.



**CAZ** *(Off.)*

I smell something tasty. My mouth is watering!

**DONNIE** *(Hugs her)*

You are very brave, my lady.

*Cassius enters.*

**CAZ**

Ah, yes. Ah, yes. I always forget just how delicious you look.

**GWEN**

If you picked me up when you promised, you'd see a lot more of me.

*Caz starts to dance.*

**CAZ**

My sweet-smelling babe, I texted you. Come dance with me.

*Caz pulls her in to his dancing.*

**GWEN**

I got home late. Donnie was home all alone.

**CAZ**

And the kid looks fine, right?

*Caz air punches at Donnie.*

I worked a little overtime. Making a little extra to spend on my girl.

**GWEN**

Just let me know next time, please?

**CAZ**

Promise.

*Kisses Gwen.*

**DONNIE**

Ack. A surprise attack.

*Donnie pulls out his crooked sword.*

Zing-zing. *(Pokes Caz)* Stab at you, Dragon!

*Caz leaps and laughs.*

**CAZ**

Whoa. Sneaky little guy.

*He ruffles Donnie's hair.*

**DONNIE**

The Knight always fights for the lady.

**CAZ**

Hear that, Gwen? A fight for the 'lady.'

*Caz feints an attack. Donnie responds with his sword.*

Take a cab next time, 'lady.'

*Caz and Donnie parry.*

**GWEN**

Cassius, I haven't got that kind of money.

*Donnie whacks away. Caz feints, teasing Donnie.*

Take it easy, boys.

*Caz scoots away. Donnie chases.*

**DONNIE**

I got you. I got you, Despicable Dragon.

**CAZ**

Ya!

*Caz unexpectedly punches hard in Donnie's direction. Startled, Donnie runs to Gwen.*

**DONNIE**

Mom.

**CAZ** *(Chuckles.)*

Almost got you, didn't I?

**GWEN**

Cassius. You scared him.

**CAZ** *(To Donnie.)*

You're not scared, are you boy?

**DONNIE** *(To Gwen.)*

I, I, I had to save *you*.

**CAZ**

See? Just playing, Gwen.

**GWEN**

Remember what I said about violence, hon?

**DONNIE**

That Dragon tried biting you.

**GWEN**

Why don't you go read for a while, hon. We'll have a knight snack later.

**DONNIE**

I'm gonna fix Nothing, my Blue Blade, like the never-scared Siegfried.

*Donnie starts to exit.*

**GWEN**

Say good night, hon.

**DONNIE**

Good night, my lady.

**GWEN**

I'll be in later, Donnie.

*Donnie grabs a book or two and 'exits' to his room, still in view of the audience.*

**CAZ**

The kid needs to learn to handle himself better.

**GWEN**

What do you mean? I share stories with him. I'm taking him to the opera. We talk about good—

**CAZ**

Not like that.

**DONNIE** *(To self.)*

My lady is alone with the Dragon.

**GWEN**

He likes the stories, Cassius. So do I. They teach admirable behavior.

**CAZ**

Admirable?

**GWEN**

Kind. Gentle. Respectful behavior. Chivalrous. *(With a chuckle)* Shovelrust. We could do with more gentlemanly manners in this world.

**DONNIE**

I gotta create Nothing, the Blue Blade, to save her.

*Donnie leafs through a book. Then works on his sword.*

**CAZ**

I'm talking about fighting off real bullies. How's a 7 year old kid supposed to--

**GWEN**

Donnie's nine, Cassius.

**CAZ**

Serious? Wow. Nine and playing 'knight.' He definitely needs to learn to stand up for himself, then. Kids'll pick on--

**GWEN**

I don't want him fighting. And I would be happier if you didn't encourage that.

**CAZ**

I'm only thinking of him, babe.

**GWEN**

I appreciate what you're trying to do. But no fighting please, Cassius.

**CAZ**

Caz. Why won't you ever remember? Caz.

**GWEN**

Cassius is nicer.

*Donnie swings his 'new' sword.*

**DONNIE**

Sing, Nothing. Zing-zing.

**CAZ**

Say Caz.

*Caz tickles her. Gwen pushes him playfully away.*

**GWEN**

Cassius!

**DONNIE**

Zing-zing!

**CAZ**

Caz. Say it. (*Tickles her.*) Caz. Caz. Caz.

**GWEN** (*A little loud*)

You drive me crazy sometimes!

*Donnie hears an attack by the dragon.*

**DONNIE**

My lady?

**CAZ**

Oh, yeah. That's your...

*Caz gestures for her to say his name. Beat.*

**GWEN**

I'm gonna get dinner together.

**CAZ**

Ah. You're so mean.

**GWEN**

Caz.

**CAZ**

Oh-ho. You do love me.

*Caz scoops her into dancing again.*

**GWEN**

Put me down, Cassius.

**DONNIE**

The Bravery Knight gets ready for action.

**GWEN**

Behave.

**CAZ**

What's the fun in that?

**GWEN**

You could show him what admirable behavior look likes. Be a good model for Donnie.

**CAZ**

I'd rather be the dragon, snatching the 'lady' from her castle.

**DONNIE** *(Narrates.)*

Once upon this time right now, a dragon was on the loose.

**CAZ**

Let's go out and have a good time.

**GWEN** *(Reminder.)*

Donnie.

**DONNIE** *(Narrates.)*

It was spying an all alone Lady in a Castle.

**CAZ**

Oh, call a girlfriend to babysit. Don't you girls like to do that for each other?

**GWEN**

We can eat right here. Together. Watch a movie.

**CAZ**

Just for an hour, what say? We'll just lock the door behind us. The kid'll be safe. We'll leave him with some popcorn. He can watch TV or something.

**DONNIE** *(Narrates.)*

The dragon attacked at the castle.

**GWEN**

Don't even joke like that.

**CAZ**

Then I'll just have to scoop you up, throw you onto my back and carry you off into the clouds.

*Caz picks up Gwen.*

**GWEN**

Hey!

**DONNIE** *(Narrates.)*

The Lady of the Castle called out...

**GWEN** *(Tries to be serious.)*

Stop. Stop.

**DONNIE** *(Narrates.)*

"A cruel dragon threatens my life." The Despicable dragon just roared.

**CAZ** *(Calls out)*

Hey, Kid! I'm gonna kidnap your mother!

**DONNIE** *(Narrates.)*

The black, inky thing flew at the lady, trapping her.

**GWEN**

Shhh.

**CAZ** *(Calls out)*

You'll be alright, yeah, kid?

**DONNIE** *(Narrates.)*

The lady called on the Bravery Knight.

**GWEN**

Stop talking like that.

**CAZ**

If you dance with me.

**DONNIE** *(Narrates.)*

The Bravery Knight called bravely...

**CAZ**

Dance!

**GWEN**

Don't tease.

**DONNIE** *(Narrates.)*

"You will not be hurt, my Lady."

*They dance...*

**SCENE 2A: IMAGINATION**

*...and transition into Donnie's imagination, becoming his story characters. A Lady struggles in a Dragon's grip.*

**DONNIE**

"I will slay the dragon."

*Donnie stabs at the shadows with his sword.*

His sword shined in the dark. Zing-zing. Ha!

*Donnie knocks the lady from the dragon's grip. It roars.*

My lady.

*Donnie reaches out to grab her. The dragon growls, knocks Donnie to the ground.*

Ah, you Despicable Dragon!

*The dragon grabs the lady and flies off with her as she struggles.*

My lady! No. Wait!

*They fly off. Donnie is stunned.*

That's not the way the stories are supposed to happen! *(Missing her.)* Mom.

**END OF EXCERPT – CONTACT DANIEL FOR A COMPLETE SCRIPT**