

# Taking Control



A n n   L o v e

Royal Fireworks Press  
Unionville, New York

*Dedicated to the patience, support, and love of  
David, Melanie, Jennifer, and Adrian*



This edition copyright © 2021 Royal Fireworks Online Learning, Inc.  
Original publication copyright © 1990 Trillium Press, Inc.  
All Rights Reserved.

Royal Fireworks Press  
P.O. Box 399  
41 First Avenue  
Unionville, NY 10988-0399  
(845) 726-4444  
fax: (845) 726-3824  
email: [mail@rfwp.com](mailto:mail@rfwp.com)  
website: [rfwp.com](http://rfwp.com)



ISBN: 978-0-89824-998-9

Publisher: Dr. T.M. Kemnitz  
Editor: Jennifer Ault  
Cover Illustration: Christopher Tice  
Book and Cover Designer: Kerri Ann Ruhl

Printed and bound in Unionville, New York, on acid-free paper  
using vegetable-based inks at the Royal Fireworks facility. 31mr21

## CHAPTER ONE

# A SHADOWY RECESS

“This is so boring,” Julian whispered to the girl standing next to him. He longed to escape the display case and his teacher’s surveying glances.

“It’s better than being in math class,” the girl whispered back. “If we were back at school, Mrs. Hogarth would be checking our homework right now.”

“Yeah, but Mrs. Hogarth doesn’t talk to us like we’re a bunch of toddlers.” Julian’s voice got louder. “This guide could talk to us like adults, you know, not like little kids who don’t understand anything.”

“Shhh!” the girl rasped. “Mr. Cole will hear you!”

Julian glanced over at his teacher. Mr. Cole had heard all right; he was scowling and wagging a finger at Julian. Julian stared down at the heels of the boy in front of him to avoid Mr. Cole’s glare. He wanted to get away from this lecture, to disappear into a hallway or a gallery on his own so he could look at things that might actually interest him. He had hoped that this trip to the museum would give him all he needed for his project on Alexander the Great, but the guide was hopeless. All she did was drone on and on about objects that were untouchably locked away behind the glass of the display cases. What about the people who might have used those objects? She hadn’t mentioned them, and she

certainly hadn't mentioned Alexander the Great. He'd have to lug home all those library research books after all.

Julian glanced at Mr. Cole again. The teacher's back was turned. Now was his chance! He slipped to the back of the group, found a recessed doorway, and ducked into its shadows. Perfect! He leaned his shoulder against the door and closed his eyes in both boredom and frustration.

*Even the ancient Greeks wouldn't care about this museum tour*, he thought. *On a day like this, they'd be outside playing games.* Of course, the Greeks hadn't played baseball, Julian's favorite game. He wondered what Alexander would have thought of a game like baseball. Did they have team sports back then? He tried to imagine Alexander playing shortstop. No, Alexander would probably have insisted on being pitcher. Julian could see Greek fans, all dressed in bedsheet tunics, swapping baseball trivia and statistics.

Suddenly he felt the doorknob turning against his side, and before he could shift his balance, he tumbled shoulder-first through the opening door, landing on a worn oriental carpet. The door shut quietly behind him.

When Julian sat up, he found himself looking at the nametag on the breast pocket of a lab coat: "Mr. Callisthenes, Near Eastern Division." He looked farther up to the aging face of a stocky man with deep-set eyes, a head of gray hair, and a curling gray beard.

"I'm getting clever at rescuing daydreamers," Mr. Callisthenes remarked wryly. "You're safe here." He spoke with a slight accent. "Your classmates and your teacher are

focused on the guide. No one will notice that you've given them the slip."

Julian felt embarrassed. He'd been caught not paying attention before, and he usually got into trouble for it. But here was someone who seemed to approve of his daydreaming. He stared dumbly at the nametag, unsure of what to say.

Like an old-fashioned actor, Mr. Callisthenes posed, one finger held to his lips. Julian could hear the guide's mumble through the door as it got louder. The group must be moving toward them.

Mr. Callisthenes waited until the droning voice disappeared as the guide led his class to the next exhibit. Then he said to Julian, "You and I have something in common: neither of us can tolerate history when it is lifeless."

Julian looked around the room. It was apparently an office, but it was the tidiest office that Julian had ever seen—not what he'd expect from a museum curator. There were books floor to ceiling on every wall, but there wasn't one that was out of place. There was a desk, but it held no friendly clutter. On its polished surface lay a single scroll of yellowed paper wound around a smooth wooden stick. Carved at the top of the stick, about the size of Julian's thumb, was the head of a young man crowned with a wreath of delicate leaves.

The entire room was neat and organized, just like his dad would like Julian's bedroom to be. It would make the perfect setting for a glossy magazine ad selling something boring like filing systems. Julian could see Mr. Callisthenes

in the picture: he wouldn't have to act to come across as fussy. Julian would quickly turn the page!

But, Julian thought, this man had done him a good turn. Maybe he'd better try to be polite. "Is that carving on the scroll Alexander?" he asked.

"No and yes," came the answer. "It is Alexander, but carved to compare him favorably with Achilles, the Greek hero of the Trojan War, not as he actually was." Mr. Callisthenes picked up the scroll and ran his thumb over the features on the carving. His voice softened. "My special interest is Alexander. I've spent my later years trying to uncover the real man hidden in the art and writings of those who idealized him and promoted the myth. Would you like me to introduce you to him?"

"Okay," Julian shrugged. He wasn't sure what that meant, but it was better than going back out to join the dreary tour.

Mr. Callisthenes took off his lab coat and draped it over a chair, revealing a loose white tunic and sandals. *What peculiar special effects*, Julian thought. What was going on?

Mr. Callisthenes looked right into Julian's eyes and said, "Alexander was about your age when I first met him."

CHAPTER TWO

HORSE DEALING

Julian felt a hot breeze on his neck and saw that Mr. Callisthenes's tunic was swaying gently. They seemed to be standing in a grove of oak trees looking over a dry valley toward the late afternoon sun. Nearby, across a heat-scorched meadow, stood a pillared mansion.

Julian thought he'd entered his best daydream ever! Could Mr. Callisthenes actually bring a story alive? Julian decided not to think about it too much in case he lost the magical feeling he was experiencing.

Just then, four men in brown tunics came out from behind the mansion. They were leading a rebellious black horse onto the meadow. The horse was magnificent, prancing with short quick steps and pulling its head back against the reins, which one of the men gripped tightly from the ground.

Julian slipped back into the shade of the trees, feeling hot and conspicuous in his jeans and ball cap, but Mr. Callisthenes stood in full view as the grooms coaxed and whipped the horse out into the meadow.

The horse would not stand still, even when the grooms stopped driving it. It reared and bucked and spun around again and again, kicking up the dry, dusty earth. Its black coat glistened with sweat, but the animal didn't tire. Julian thought he could see confusion, even terror, in its eyes. He

wanted to jump out and yell, “Stop it!” to the men who were handling it so roughly. Instead, he turned his eyes away from the horse.

That’s when he noticed a group of men casually gathering on the steps of the mansion. One was young. He looked to be about ten years old—Julian’s age. While the others wore long, elaborate robes, the boy wore a short white tunic and a purple cloak over his shoulders.

They all bowed attentively when an older, bearded man strode out of the mansion to join them. With a nod in return and without breaking his pace, the older man marched onto the field and headed for the horse. The boy followed closely behind him, their shadows streaking long across the meadow toward the powerful animal.

As he got closer, Julian saw that the man’s arms were scored with old wounds, and his left eye was shriveled. He was ugly to look at, but Julian found something graceful in the rhythm of his body as he walked. As he approached the horse, sunlight flashed off a gold circlet around his brow. Was this man a king?

“So this is the Thessalian stallion,” the man said approvingly. “Thirteen talents is a lot of gold for a horse, but he’s a beautiful beast. I want to ride before I decide.” He spoke in a powerful, resonant voice. It wasn’t English, but Julian was shocked to discover that he understood the language!

One of the grooms bowed low and said, “Allow me to steady Bucephalus for you, sire.” He reached for the bridle.



“King Philip of Macedonia deserves to be seen astride a mount of such power, such speed, and such grace.”

Bucephalus tossed his head and pulled back on the reins. The groom yanked the horse’s head down, but the horse snorted in fear and pain and reared.

King Philip stepped back from the deadly flashing hooves and shouted, “What’s the meaning of this? You bring me an unbroken and vicious horse? Lead it away!”

But the boy blurted, “No! You’ll lose a beautiful horse because they don’t know how to handle it!”

Bucephalus reared again and then lunged backwards, away from King Philip and the groom. The king ignored the boy and shouted again, “By Herakles, take it away!”

The boy repeated in a clear voice, “You’ll be losing a beautiful horse, Father.”

“Alexander!” The king’s loud voice trembled with anger. “Do you reproach those older than yourself, as if you can manage a horse better than my best grooms?”

“I can handle this one better,” replied Alexander. Julian thought that Alexander seemed remarkably controlled. He wouldn’t have stood up to his own father with such cool confidence.

As the horse danced around them, its eyes wide with fear, the king asked in a grating voice, “Alexander, if you cannot, what penalty will you pay for being so impertinent?”

Alexander pursed his lips. “I’ll pay the price of the horse.”

At this, everyone laughed. The king looked startled, and the laughter died.

King Philip studied his son for a moment. Then he, too, broke into a good-natured laugh. “All right, son,” he said. “If you can control Bucephalus, I’ll buy him for you. If not, you will pay me thirteen talents.”

Alexander’s face grew serious, and he nodded in agreement. He walked over to Bucephalus and took the reins. The horse reared, but Alexander held on tightly and carefully maneuvered the horse’s massive head so that the animal was facing the sun. Then he loosened his fluttering cloak and let it slip to the ground. The horse pulled back in fear, but Alexander followed its movements with his hand, and after a moment, it slowly lowered its head. Alexander touched its face gently, rubbing his hand up the huge nose and into the white star on its forehead. The horse took a step forward toward the boy.

The company gasped. Alexander had been the only one to see that the horse was simply afraid of its own shadow, lengthened by the late afternoon sun, and the movements of the loose garments worn by the men around it.

Alexander talked softly to the horse, and Bucephalus nickered in reply. Then Alexander slowly moved to the animal’s side and climbed gently but confidently into the saddle. Still speaking softly to it and stroking its neck, he urged Bucephalus forward, pressing his thighs into its back and tapping its flanks lightly with his heels. Bucephalus responded by breaking into a smooth, powerful canter.

Bucephalus cantered far down the field. The whole company, including Mr. Callisthenes and Julian, stared after them in disbelief. When the pair reached a distant woodland edge, they stopped, turned, and cantered back. Facing away from the sun now, the horse stepped confidently into its own shadow. Alexander's face remained intent with concentration, but his movements were graceful and easy, like those of a trained athlete. When he reached his father, he reined Bucephalus to a halt and dismounted, landing lightly on the ground.

The company broke into loud applause. King Philip could not control the tears streaming down the scars of his face. "My boy," he said, "you must find a kingdom big enough for your ambitions. Macedonia is too small for you!"

Alexander burst into laughter and handed Bucephalus's reins to a groom. "Take him to the royal stables," he ordered. Then, flashing a victorious smile at his father, he strode across the darkening field to the mansion. The king and his grooms, left with the now-quiet Bucephalus, stared admiringly after him.

Julian looked at Mr. Callisthenes and realized with a start that they were back in his office. He asked in amazement, "How did you do that?"