

The King Seeks a Friend
A one-act play for children
by
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Characters

Kings Jack- a lonely king

Quick- king's page

Baker-a broad woman

Shoemaker

Barber

Traveler-a young youth

SCENE 1

At Rise: KING JACK stands in the throne room of his castle on a hill. He stares out the tall window at the small village below

KING JACK

(turning. In a loud voice)

Quick, I wish to see you.

QUICK, a page enters the room. He stops before the king, and snaps his heels together.

QUICK

(bowing)

Your Grace.

KING JACK

It is market day in the village below. The streets are filled with villagers. I wish to walk to walk among them and find a friend.

QUICK

A friend, sire?

KING JACK

I have been living in this castle along for too long. I wish to find someone with whom I can share stories and ideas about the world.

QUICK

That person will be hard to find, sire. Every person in the village would like to be a friend of the king. How will you find someone you can trust? How will you know that person wants only favors from you?

KING JACK

I'll know that person when I see him or her.

QUICK

Very good, sire. I will be happy to accompany you on your friend quest..

SCENE 2

Village scene. Villagers are strolling before a line of shops. Stage right is cobbler shop. Mid-stage is bakery and stage left is barber shop. King Jack and Quick appear stage right. Villagers stop and bow to them. King and squire stop before cobbler shop. SHOEMAKER stands outside his shop. The other villagers on the road freeze.

KING JACK

(to shoemaker)

Greetings, good fellow. Isn't this a splendid day for a stroll.

SHOEMAKER

(looking at king's feet)

Many people are out walking today, Your Majesty. If you wish for a walking companion, I would be happy to join you.⁴

KING JACK

(to Shoemaker)

Kind of you to offer. But I don't want to take you from your work. I see the your excellent craftsmanship on all the villager's feet. Fine shoes and boots, the Good day to you.

SHOEMAKER

Kind of you to say, Your Highness.

QUICK

(to Shoemaker)

Good day.

Villagers begin strolling again. King Jack and Quick continued walking through village.

QUICK

(to king)

I don't understand, sire. The shoemaker seemed intelligent and good-natured. Why couldn't he be the friend you seek?

KING JACK

Did you notice his eyes, Quick? He kept looking at my shoes. It would be hard to be friends with a man who was concerned with one thing...my feet and what footwear he could sell me!

King Jack and the page stopped before the bakery. In the doorway stands a woman in a baker's apron. The other villagers on the road freeze.

KING JACK

(to baker)

Greetings, madam. Such a sunny day, The wheat fields outside the village looked green and bountiful.

BAKER

(gazing at the king's stomach)

The harvest will be a good one this year, Your Grace. Would you care to come into my bakery for a freshly-baked muffin

KING JACK

(to woman)

Thank you for the offer, madam But I just ate a filling meal. But I must commend you on healthy and well-fed the villagers appear to be.

BAKER

(bowing)

Thank you Your Highness. Enjoy your stroll.

King Jack and Quick continue walking among villagers.

QUICK

That woman seemed kind and generous, sire. Why wouldn't she make a good companion?

KING JACK

Again her eyes told the story. The baker's eyes remained on my belt buckle. How unsettling it would be to have a friend who cared about one thing...my stomach and what baked goods she could sell me to fill it!

King Jack and Quick stop by a barber sitting on a bench outside the barbershop. Other villagers on the road freeze.

KING JACK
(to BARBER)

Greeting, good fellow.

BARBER
(stands and bows)

Your Excellency.

KING JACK
Isn't the sky extra blue today?

BAKER
(looking at the top of the king's head))
Indeed it is, Your Grace.

KING JACK
(rubbing the back of his neck)
I expect it will be quite warm by this afternoon..

BARBER
(still staring at the top of the king's head)
Indeed it will, Your Excellency. Would you care to sit on my bench where it's shady and cool?"

KING JACK
Kind of you to offer. But I prefer to keep walking. But I've noticed how well shorn all the villagers are, sir. You do your job extra well.

BARBER
Thank you, Your Highness.

QUICK
(to barber)
Good day.

Villager move again. King Jack and Quick continued walking among them.

QUICK

(to king)

I'm more baffled than ever, sire. He was an agreeable and helpful man. Why wouldn't he make a good friend for you?

KING JACK

Once more the eyes told the barber's true interest. He never stopped staring at the top of my head. Who wants to have a friend who had a single thought...my hair and when he could give me my next haircut?

A TRAVELER enters stage left, whistling. The Traveler tips his hat toward King James and Quick. Other villagers freeze. King Jack and Quick stop before him. Villagers freeze.

KING JACK

(to traveler)

Greetings, young traveler. Don't the mountains look majestic this fine day.

TRAVELER

(looking into the distance)

They do, Your Highness. I just hiked through those mountains. It was a splendid journey. The air was refreshing and the vistas were grand.

KING JACK

Excellent! Excellent!

TRAVELER

(looking straight into king's eyes)

What, may I ask, brings you into the village today, Your Highness?

KING JACK

(nodding and smiling)

I seek a dinner guest. Would you care to join me in the castle for some good food and conversation this evening? Perhaps we could play a game of chess.

TRAVELER

It would be an honor, sir. I'd enjoy sharing my stories of travel with you and hearing your thoughts about the world.

KING JACK

Excellent. Come to the castle gate at sundown and the guard will let you in.

TRAVELER

(bowing)

See you then, Your Highness.

QUICK

Very good.

King Jack and Quick walk toward stage left.
Villagers resume walk.

QUICK

(to king)

Please tell me, sire. How do you know the traveler will make a good companion? How was he different from any other villager we met today?

KING JACK

Again with the eyes. Did you notice how the traveler looked straight into mine. His gaze never strayed side to side, up or down, or over my shoulder. I could tell the traveler was interested in more than my shoes or stomach or hair. He was interested in what I was saying.

QUICK

I understand, Your Grace. Yes, I understand

KING JACK

Indeed, I am looking forward to our dinner conversation tonight and making a new friend.

King Jack and Quick exit stage left.

End of Play