

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

Kings Jack- a young lonely king

Quick- king's female page

Baker- a broad woman

Shoemaker- young man

Barber- elderly man

Traveler- a young youth either male or female

Villagers 1-12 adjust as available

Time: olden days in the time of kings and castles

Setting: Scene One-simple set inside castle throne room. This could be staged before the larger Scene 2- a village street with a cobbler shop, a bakery, and a barber shop.

PRODUCTION NOTES:

CHARACTERS: 4 male 2 female 1-12 villager of either gender

PLAYING TIME: 20 minutes

PROPS: throne, window frame
Large needle, thread, piece of leather
Rolling pin
Barber shears
Candle sticks
Tarot cards
Cider mug
Bouquet of flowers
Knapsack and walking stick

COSTUMES:

Kings Jack- Robe, breeches, golden crown
Quick- breeches, waistcoat, three-cornered hat with a large feather
Shoemaker- breeches and leather apron
Baker- peasant dress with white apron and baker's cap.
Barber- long pants, long striped apron
Traveler- hiking outfit, wide-brimmed hat, walking stick, knapsack
Villagers- female and male peasant outfits

SETTING:

Scene One- simple set inside castle throne room with a throne and a hanging window frame. This could be staged before scene 2
Scene Two- a village street with a cobbler shop, a bakery, and a barber shop in that order.

LIGHTING: Lights fade on opening scene before coming up on village scene behind it.

SOUND: No special sounds

MUSIC: Music from Merry Old England

SCENE 1

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

KING JACK
(turning. In a loud voice)
Quick, I wish to see you.

(QUICK, a female page, enters the room. She stops before KING JACK, and snaps her heels together.)

QUICK
(bowing)
Your Grace.

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

QUICK
A friend, sire?

KING JACK
I have been living in this castle alone for too long. I wish to find someone with whom I can share stories and ideas about the world. Someone to dine with and maybe play a game of chess.

QUICK
(looking doubtful)
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 more than just 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 walk today. I will aid you in finding this friend you seek.

KING JACK
Excellent, Quick. We shall leave at once.

Lights fade

SCENE 2

At Rise: Village scene. Music plays. Villagers stroll 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.

VILLAGER 1

Hooray for King Jack.

VILLAGER 2

Long live King Jack.

VILLAGER 3

Good day, Your highness.

(KING JACK and QUICK stop before cobbler shop. SHOEMAKER sits on workbench outside holding needle and thread. A piece of leather is on his knee. 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)

Yes, it is, Your Majesty. Many people are out walking today. In fact, I was just thinking of taking a stroll through the village myself. If you wish for a walking companion, I would be happy to join you.

KING JACK

(to SHOEMAKER)

Kind of you to offer. But I don't want to take you from your work. However, I see your excellent shoes and boots on the feet of many villagers. You do excellent work.

SHOEMAKER

(still looking at king's feet)

Thank you kindly, Your Highness.

QUICK

(to SHOEMAKER)

Good day to you, sir.

(Villagers begin strolling again.
Music plays. 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!

VILLAGER 4

Here comes the king!

VILLAGER 5

(doffing hat)

Come into my inn, King Jack!

VILLAGER 6

(hold out candles)

I have candles for sale, your grace.

(KING JACK and QUICK stopped
before a bakery. In the doorway
stands BAKER holding rolling pin.
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

(staring at 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 BAKER)

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

BAKER

(bowing)

Thank you kindly, Your Highness. I hope you'll enjoy your
stroll.

(KING JACK and QUICK continue walking among the villagers. Music plays.)

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!

VILLAGER 7

It's the king! It's the king!

VILLAGER 8

(bowing and holding up tarot cards)

Would you like your fortune told, My Liege?

VILLAGER 9

(curtsying)

How fine of you to visit our village, My Lord.

(KING and QUICK stop by BARBER sitting on a stool 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. I was just thinking the same thing.

KING JACK

(rubbing the back of his neck)

I expect it will be quite warm by this afternoon.

BARBER

(still studying 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. I've
noticed, however, how well shorn all the villagers are. You
do your job well.

BARBER

Thank you, Your Excellency.

QUICK

(to BARBER)

Good day, sir.

(Villagers move again. Music
plays. KING JACK and Quick
continue 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?

VILLAGER 10

King! King! Over here! Over here!

VILLAGER 11

(with an armload of flowers)

Would you like to buy some flowers, Your Majesty. They'll
brighten up the castle.

VILLAGER 12

(Holding out a mug)

How about some cider, Sire. Freshly squeezed apples.

TRAVELER enters stage left,
whistling. He tips his hat toward
KING JACK and QUICK. Other
villagers freeze. KING JACK and
QUICK stop before TRAVELER.

KING JACK

(to TRAVELER)

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

TRAVELER

(looking into the distance)

They do, My King. 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, My King?

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, My King.

QUICK

Very good.

(KING JACK and QUICK walk to
stage left. Music plays.
Villagers resume strolling.)

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

(nodding)

I understand, Your Grace. Yes, I understand

KING JACK

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

(KING JACK and QUICK exit stage left. Music plays)

Lights fade

End of Play