

Day 1

[Enter Joe, Crystal, Jack, and Abby to four corners of the stage. Joe is raking, Crystal is counting money, Jack is flexing, Abby is working on equations. Enter King from right to center.]

King: [To crowd] Hello there. Welcome to my kingdom. I am King Ben and this is the land of Littleton. Now Littleton is a lovely place filled with all kinds of wonderful people. First, we have Sir Jack, the strongest knight in all the land. He has defended this kingdom from all kinds of danger. This is Lord Richard, but around here we call him Rich, and for good reason. Rich has more money than any other subject. Over here, we have Dr. Abby, a brilliant scientist. She could solve an advanced mathematical equation faster than some people could tie their shoes. And this is Joe. He is the hardest worker in all of Littleton. He might not be as strong, rich, or smart as the others, but he is incredibly special to me. Well, this week is an important week because it's my birthday on Friday. I'm going to have a great feast to celebrate. Herald! [Enter Herald from right.]

Herald: [Bows] Yes, your majesty.

King: I want you to announce to all the people in the kingdom that we are having a great feast on Friday and that the noblest of my subjects will be invited.

Herald: Yes, your highness. [Bows and exits right]

King: Well, this week looks like it's sure to be interesting. Let's watch and see what happens. [King sits to the side. Enter herald from left.]

Herald: Gather round! Gather round! I have a message from the king.

Joe: From the king? Wow! I wonder what it could be.

Jack: Maybe he is promoting his strongest knight to palace guard.

Crystal: Or perhaps he wants to thank me for my generous donation to build his new library.

Abby: I suppose he wants to congratulate me for my newest invention. [All gather around herald]

Herald: Here ye! Here ye! The king would like to announce that this Friday, he will be celebrating his birthday with a wonderful banquet. His noblest subjects will receive an invitation to this feast during the week.

Jack: His noblest subject, eh? [Starts flexing] I wonder who that could be?

Herald: [Unimpressed] Indeed. Well, be sure to be on your best behavior this week. You never know what the king may see. Farewell! [Exit left]

Crystal: Sounds like I need to go buy a kingly gift for his majesty.
Sir Jack, what do you think? A new scepter maybe?

Joe: Wait, didn't he say he was going to do the inviting later in the week? How do you know he's going to pick you?

Crystal: Ha. As if his majesty wouldn't invite the richest man in all the land to his birthday party! I buy all the best presents. Who wouldn't want that? [Everyone but king freezes, king moves to center of the stage with bag.]

King: A new scepter? I wonder if she means one like this [Pulls scepter from bag and shows audience]? Or like this [Pulls out another]? Or this one [Pulls out another]? Crystal is great, but I'm not impressed by her money. I want her to know that I care about *her*, not just what she can give me. [King returns to the side, citizens unfreeze.]

Joe: Wow, I guess the king would be a fool not to invite you.

Crystal: You bet he would be. Anyway, I have to get to the market, I hear they have a "buy 1 scepter, get 1 free" deal. I can get one for him and one for myself. Then the king and I could match! [Exits right.]

Joe: Man, Lady crystal sure is lucky. Well hopefully the three of us might get invited too!

Jack: Hopefully? Listen kid, I don't mean to brag, but I'm the strongest knight in the kingdom. I protected the castle from

the enemy three times. And I can lift anything [attempts to lift boulder, struggles, is unable]... well, just about anything. If for no other reason, the king needs to invite me for his own safety.

Joe: Safety?

Jack: Of course, don't be naïve. There is danger all around us. Enemies of the kingdom. Why just the other day, I heard that some thieves from the forest kidnapped a family and took all their money.

Joe: Enemies? Thieves? Yikes. The king has to invite you. The party wouldn't be safe otherwise. [Citizens freeze, king comes to center, lifts and moves boulder.]

King: It looks like Sir Jack isn't as strong as he thinks. Still, he is a good and brave knight. I am thankful to have him in my kingdom. [King returns to side, citizens unfreeze.]

Jack: Anyway, it's time for me to go eat lunch. Can't protect the kingdom on an empty stomach. [Exits left].

Joe: Well Dr. Abby, I guess that just leaves the two of us to wonder if we'll be going to the party.

Abby: I believe you might have miscalculated when you said the two of us. You meant to say, "One," for surely I will be invited as well. After all, the king needs someone of my intellectual acumen with whom to discuss policy.

Joe: I have no idea what you just said.

Abby: [Sighs] The king needs a smart person to discuss smart things with.

Joe: Oh. Well maybe there will be room for me too.

Abby: I wouldn't count on it. According to my calculations [picks up whiteboard and marker, writes], when you factor in the size of the king's dining room, the number of his family members, and a few other factors, after Crystal, Jack, and I are invited, that leaves [turns board around with big "=0" at end of equation] no room for you.

Joe: [Looking discouraged] Oh. [Citizens freeze, king approaches Abby's board.]

King: Looks like she forgot to carry the one [starts erasing] and... never mind. Look, Dr. Abby is brilliant. I just wish she was smart enough to see that her heart is way more important to me than her brain. [King returns to side, citizens unfreeze.]

Abby: Listen Joe, I'm sure you're a great guy, but palaces and banquets aren't for farmers. They're for rich nobles, strong knights, and smart doctors. The king has better things to do than have peasants over for dinner. He has a whole kingdom to rule! You wouldn't want to be selfish and have the king distracted from protecting his people because he was busy talking to some farmer like you, would you?

Joe: Well, no.

Abby: Of course not! But hey, maybe you'll get lucky. Maybe the king will let the farmers have some of the leftovers from the party... assuming Sir Jack doesn't eat it all. Anyway, I need to get back to the lab. I'm almost done my newest invention. [Exits left.]

Joe: Those guys were right. Why would the king care about me when there are so many other people who are richer, stronger, or smarter than me? The king definitely has better things to do than invite me to his party. But I really would love to go. Anyway, I better get back to the farm. I should try to do something useful and grow the king's crops. [Exits right.]

King: [Moves to center stage] No, that's not true! I love Joe! He is special to me, and I care about him! It doesn't matter that Lady Crystal has more money, or that Sir Jack is stronger, or that Dr. Abby is smarter. I care about all my subjects, from the greatest knight to the smallest farmer. I hope he learns how much he means to me this week. [Herald enters from left.]

Herald: Your majesty, you are needed back at the castle.

King: Well, sounds like I need to go. See you guys tomorrow!

[King and herald exit left]