

Day 2

[Enter Joe. Joe is shoveling across the stage. Enter king to front.]

King: Only 3 more days until the big feast. I guess I should start deciding who to invite. Hey look, it's Joe. I love watching how hard he works to support his family and provide food for our kingdom. Not to mention, the crops he grows are delicious! I hope he has a great day. [King moves to side.]

Joe: Wow, this farming sure is going fast. I'm already halfway through the field. At this rate, I might be done before lunch. In fact, maybe I can do this faster [begins to run]... uh oh [shovel hits rock, both shovel and Joe fall over]. Well that hurt [picks up shovel, tries to use it but he can't]. Well that's not good. How am I supposed to finish farming if this shovel won't work? [Enter Jack from right.] Sir Jack! What are you doing here?

Jack: I was out on guard duty when I heard a loud crash coming from over here. What's going on?

Joe: Well I was working the field when I decided to try to go faster so I could finish earlier. But I wasn't watching where I was going, so I hit a rock and fell over. I'm fine, but the rock busted the handle, so now I can't use it.

Jack: Sure you can! You don't need a handle. Handles are for weak farmers. You're not a weak farmer, are you?

Joe: I don't think so...

Jack: Of course you aren't. Look, all you gotta do is put your back into it.

Joe: Put my back into it?

Jack: Yeah, just put your back into it. [Jack uses shovel] There, you see, easy as pie. Well, I would love to stick around and help, but the kingdom isn't going to defend itself.

Joe: See you later, Sir Jack, and thanks for the tip! [Jack exits right.] Put my back into it. Put my back into it... [picks up shovel, tried to use, struggles, it doesn't work.] Gee, it looked so much easier when someone big and strong like Sir Jack was using it. [Tries shoveling again] What's the use? I'll never finish at this rate. Not that it matters or anything. It's not like I'm an important knight like Sir Jack. [He freezes, king moves to center]

King: That's not true! Joe is very important to me. If we didn't have him growing crops, there would be nothing for Sir Jack, or anyone else for that matter, to eat. More than that, I care about Joe as a person. I want to help him, not just because he provides our food, but because I love him. I know what to do. Herald! [Herald enters right.]

Herald: Yes your majesty.

King: I want you to... [whispers something into herald's ear].

Herald: Yes of course! Certainly, your majesty. [Herald exits right, king moves to side, Joe unfreezes, Crystal enters from left.]

Joe: Lady Crystal, how can I help you?

Crystal: Well my husband, Lord Rich, was planning a marvelous stew for our lunch, when he realized we were all out of carrots. I told him I would go get a fresh one from the farm.

Joe: I could get you one from last month's harvest, but it looks like we won't be growing more anytime soon.

Crystal: And why is that?

Joe: My shovel broke this morning and it's impossible to get the field ready without it. I tried putting my back into it, but I'm not strong enough to use it without a handle.

Crystal: I don't understand the problem. Why can't you just buy a new one?

Joe: I can't afford that! New shovels are much too expensive.

Crystal: Don't be silly, shovels are cheap if you know the right place to get one. In fact, I heard Dr. Abby is having a 50% off sale on shovels right now. They cost next to nothing.

Joe: Wow, thanks for the tip! You can help yourself to carrots over there, my treat. It's the least I can do for you after you gave me such great advice.

Crystal: No problem. [Crystal exits left, Joe exits right. Abby sets up "shovel stand" center, Herald is at table. Joe enters left.]

Herald: The king thanks you, Dr. Abby [Herald and Abby shake hands].

Abby: Pleasure doing business with you, you can pick it up out back [Herald exits].

Joe: Good morning, Dr. Abby.

Abby: Hello, sir. What can I do for you?

Joe: Lady Crystal told me that you were having a sale on shovels. Mine broke this morning and I really need a new one.

Abby: Well, you're in luck, the king's herald just bought one, so we only have one left.

Joe: Wow, the king needed a shovel too. I wish the king took care of my needs. Then I would never have to worry. Anyway, how much do I owe you?

Abby: 50,000 shekels of silver.

Joe: What? Lady Crystal told me they were cheap!

Abby: I think you and Lady Crystal might have different ideas of what cheap means.

Joe: Is there any way you could offer me a discount?

Abby: I wish I could, but it wouldn't be good for business. But maybe there is something I could do to help.

Joe: What would that be?

Abby: Only the handle is broken, right? The rest of the shovel works fine?

Joe: Yeah.

Abby: It's simple really. All you have to do is [pulls out whiteboard] compensate for the opposing pressure of the shovel by pushing at a 94 degree angle parallel to the perpendicular of the crops. Then turn your legs like this and the shovel will work fine. You won't even notice that the handle is missing.

Joe: Umm, ok. Thanks. [Joe exits left, Abby takes table and exits right. Joe re-enters right with shovel]. Ok, so I put my hands like this... and my legs like this [contorts body in strange shape, tries to shovel, falls over]. What's the use? Looks like I won't be farming anymore. Oh well, it's not like anyone will notice or care. I'm just some random farmer. [Joe leaves the shovel on the ground on the side of the stage, sits down to

the opposite side looking dejected, then freezes. King moves to center, herald enters left with shovel.]

Herald: Here it is my Lord, just like you asked.

King: Thank you. Joe really needs this. Let's go give it to him.

Herald: Yes, your majesty [exits left].

King: [To audience] as you guys may have noticed, I love watching my subjects. They are so wonderful! But whenever I try to talk to them as their king, they act differently. They try to show me their best selves, not who they really are. Sometimes I like to go into the town wearing a disguise. It allows me to get to know the people for who they are. [King puts on disguise, approaches Joe. Joe's back is to the shovel as they talk, while the herald replaces the broken shovel with a new one.] Hey there, Joe. What seems to be the problem?

Joe: Hello sir. I was working my field this morning when the wheel on my shovel broke. I tried putting my back into it, but I wasn't strong enough, I couldn't afford a new one, and apparently I'm not smart enough to understand Dr. Abby's solution.

King: That's unfortunate, but maybe things will work out.

Joe: I don't think so. I need my shovel. There's no way I can grow my crops without it, and if I don't grow crops, I will have no way to take care of my family or feed the kingdom.

King: Feed the kingdom? That sounds pretty important. I'm sure the king could help.

Joe: The king? He has a whole kingdom to run and doesn't even know who I am. Why would the king stop everything he was doing to help some random farmer?

King: I wouldn't be to sure about that. Anyway, I'm pretty good with my hands. Maybe I could fix your shovel. Where is it?

Joe: It's right over... wait. What? [Facing shovel, with king behind him] Is that a brand new shovel? And it says it's for me! This is wonderful!

King: Congratulations, Joe. You deserve it for all the hard work you do for me [exits left without Joe noticing].

Joe: I'm sorry, what did you say? And how do you know... [turns and realizes king is gone] my name? Well, looks like it's time to get back to work. This is just what I needed. [Takes shovel, exits right.]