

Once a King, Always a King

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As an attempt to expand my Booksie portfolio, here is a short play with enough one liners to guarantee indigestion!



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ONCE A KING, ALWAYS A KING (A PLAY)

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

JESTER: A Woody Allen-ish neurotic stand-up Jester

KING: The current malevolent Potentate

SLOTHE: The town cabbage borscht merchant

CREOLE: A Leper with one arm

JESEPE: The humble cobbler

(The scene opens with Jester feverishly telling jokes to King in his chambers who is thoroughly unamused. This should be around the reign of King Arthur, early 6th century)

Jester: âand so the naked man says to the naked woman, â Wow! I didnât know there was *that* much difference between Jews and Catholics!â Bah Dum Bum!

King: (remains unamused. His face turns to anger as he sits upon the throne) For three eves in a row, you Jester have proven to be an embarrassment to my royal staff! I will give you one week, no more, no less, to complete your act to a satisfactory level or you will be sent for imprisonment and execution!â

Jester: Y..your majesty.. I cannot engage in any execution. You see, it conflicts with my peptic ulcer. Doctorâs orders and so forthâ !

King: BEGONE! (King exits to stage left)

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Jester: (to audience) Oh woe is me! Iâ€™m a failure as a clown. I have no other material! I cannot handle execution or even worse, prison! Could you imagine? Me with guys named â€™Leftyâ€™ or â€™Spikesâ€™? They will eat me for gruel! And worse, even if the meal is bad, they will complain about not getting seconds! (Just then a voice from stage right calls out)

Slothe: FOOL!

Jester: (looking about) Who calls at this ungodly hour? Especially taking into account Mountain Pacific Time! (from behind a shrubbery on stage right come 3 figures. They are dressed in rags, obviously peasants. One of them has only one arm. The first steps forward.)

Slothe: Greetings Fool! I am Slothe, the town cabbage borsch merchant. This here is Creole, the Leper and finally Jesepe, the humble cobbler.

Jester: Great! First Iâ€™m a condemned convict and now Iâ€™m the fourth stooge! What can I do for you gentleman? A Bar Mitzvah or some sort of shindig that you need some one-liners for? Iâ€™m great at golf banquets..(To Creole:) Love the one arm. Nice touch. Truly hip.

Slothe: We are none of the things you suggest, Fool. However, we do all have something in common. (looks behind him both ways) A hatred for the King!

Jester: Yeah, youâ€™re probably right. I mean, the only person I hate more than the King was probably my aunt Ethel. You see, she had this moustache and it made me sneeze whenever I was forced to kiss her and..

Creole: Shh! You know not our intent!

Jesepe: We need an accomplice in our plot to murder the King at midnight!

Jester: (shakes head) Count me out! No way! Murder is unjust, uncouth and immoral. Besides, I have to get up early tomorrow.

Creole: Why, Fool? So you can rot in a dungeon or face execution?

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Jester: How would you like to lose your other arm?

Jesepe: Gentleman! We must not quarrel amongst ourselves! We must unite into one force that will harm the King in unquestionable ways!

Jester: Kind of like V.D.?

Jesepe: Are you with us Jester? If you accept, your freedom of living is assured!

Jester: (to Jesepe) Let me ask you something. You are the cobbler, right? So, on your tax return do you put, "one who cobbles"? Just asking!

Slothe: Enough of this tomfoolery! Creole, take out the assassination plans! (As Creole reaches for the plans, his other arm falls off)

Jester: Wonderful! We are *disarmed* already! That deserves a *hand*!

Creole: I say jail him!

Jester: Fine! Couldn't be worse than Dancing With the Stars!

Slothe: Fellows *please*! We must review our plans for the demise of the King! (they all gather round a scroll of parchment laid out before them by Slothe) First, we need someone who can play a lyre. Can you, Jester?

Jester: Well, I don't know exactly. I mean, I once played Stanley Kowalski in the medieval version of "Streetcar Named Desire" but I have never played a liar before!

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Jesepe: **Dolt!** We speak of the musical instrument!

Jester: Oh! Silly me! Of course I can! When I was in Court Jester School, I majored in lyre playing and minored in existential Euclidian Geometry!

Slothe: Excellent! His Majesty falls asleep instantly when hearing the lyre. It intoxicates his brain.

Jester: Well, in that case, I guess he shouldn't lyre and drive!

Creole: At any rate, Slothe is going to bring his Majesty's royal borscht at midnight! Upon his signal, you begin playing your lyre!

Jesepe: Once the King is asleep, I shall shoot him through the heart with a poison-tipped arrow!

Jester: Ooo..must we be so brutal? Like, I mean couldn't we just show them a clip of the Kardashian kids on vacation? That would kill anyone!

Slothe: Well comrades! I am off. The royal borscht is brewing well in the kitchen. Keep your eyes peeled for my signal.

Jester: (to audience) Why do eyes have to *peeled*? I mean seriously? Potatoes are peeled. Lemons are peeled. Why should organs be peeled? It's so creepy!

Jesepe: No time to dilly-dally! Creole and I will be in the shrubbery! Look for his sign! (the two exit stage right)

Jester: (to audience) Oh my goodness! I have to abet in a *murder*! I'm not a killer, I'm a *comedian* for crying out loud! I should be hopping around on one foot playing a flute and acting like I'm in a Gene Kelly movie! I'm not a heartless individual! Ask my insurance broker! Is there no God? If I could just witness a miracle, like a burning bush talking star talking eggplant or to see my cousin Igor get a sense of humor? Oh Alas! (Pause) I wonder why no one ever says â Alad! I guess women's rights and so

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forthâ !

Jesepe: (from behind bush stage left) Now Jester! Begin to play!

Jester: Well okay. (getting lyre) This here is a little ditty I wrote at the Filmore East thatâ !

Creole: (behind bush) Just play, curse you!

Jester: (begins to play a soothing tune on the lyre)

Creole: (behind bush) The King must be asleep by now!

Jesepe: Farewell, O unjust ruler! (pulls an arrow out while standing in front of the bush stage left) (A voice from stage right yells)

Slothe: Forget it, lads!

Jester: What?!???

Slothe: I said to forget it! Heâ s dead.

Jester: (Creole and Jesepe emerge from bush stage left. To Jesepe) Woah! Nice shootinâ Tex! I didnâ t even see the arrow!

Slothe: (Approaching from stage right) He was dead when I approached his chambers. He died while laying with the Queen.

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Jester: Well, at least he died happy.

Jesepe: Not really.

Jester: Why?

Jesepe: Have you ever seen the Queen?

Slothe: Come my good men! The tyranny has ended! Liberty and Pursuit for all! We must dance in the streets!

Jesepe: Yes! Come one, come all! The tyrant is dead! (Creole and Slothe shout encouragement and all 3 exit leaving Jester on stage alone)

Jester: (to audience) So this is how it ends. Men dancing in the streets because someone has died. I feel as though I have learned a few important lessons today. One, never have pork roast and the lay with your wife. Two, only in the shadow of death do we truly recognize how precious life is. And three, with more friends like these doofuses, who needs enemies? (exits stage right playing lyre.)

FIN

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