

Day 5

[Enter Abby, Jack, Crystal right. They sit around banquet table and are laughing and having a good time.]

Jack: So then the second penguin says, “What do you think I am, a typewriter?” [They all laugh]

Crystal: What a delightful bunch you all are! It’s nice to be able to talk to people who get what the common folk would never understand.

Abby: Yes, I love being able to talk about achievements in science and math to those who can appreciate my intellect. It’s a shame Lord Rich couldn’t make it.

Crystal: I’m sure he would love to meet you guys. But who knew Sir Jack was such a riot? Tell that one about the penguin again.

Jack: So there are two penguins wearing tuxedos...

[King enters right, Crystal, Jack, and Abby stand up]

Abby: Your majesty!

Crystal: So good to see you!

King: Thank you all for coming and welcome all to my birthday. Please have a seat. [They sit] I hope you enjoy tonight’s

feast. We will be enjoying the finest food in all the land grown at my favorite farm. By the way, have any of you seen Joe?

Jack: Joe? Who's Joe?

Crystal: I don't think I know anyone by that name.

Abby: I'm sorry sire, who?

King: You know, Joe the farmer. [Everyone else still looks confused] You know, the one whose farm is at the east end of town? [Still blank stares] You all helped him with his plow earlier this week?

Jack: Oh yeah, you mean the ice cream thief?

Crystal: You invited him? Why would you invite a peasant? What's so special about him?

King: Joe is the hardest worker and the most caring and compassionate man in the whole kingdom. Yes he sinned, but we all have. He asked for forgiveness, and I forgave him. I'm not going to start the party without him.

[Herald comes rushing in]

Herald: My lord, I went to deliver Joe's invitation, but when I got to his house, he was gone. He was taken by bandits. They left a ransom note.

Crystal: That's too bad. He was a nice kid.

Abby: It's a real shame.

Jack: Well, the food isn't going to stay warm forever. Let's eat!

King: How could I eat and enjoy this feast knowing that one of my subjects is lost and in danger? I'm going to go rescue him.

Crystal: Your highness, don't be foolish. He's just a peasant.

Jack: Yeah, you would be risking your life for him.

Abby: And besides, the rest of us are all here. Would you really leave all your guests just for one person?

King: What kind of king would I be if I didn't take care of my subjects? I'm going to rescue him.

Crystal: But he is a lowly peasant, and one who stole from you at that. It was gracious enough of you to invite him in the first place. Do you really need to go save him when he's done nothing to deserve it?

King: You know, it was gracious of me to invite any of you. When I was hurting and hungry, it was Joe who helped me out and comforted me. You were all too absorbed in your strength, smarts, and wealth. I invited you all here because I am merciful and care about all of you as well, but don't think for

a second that you all deserve to be here any more than he does. [They all look confused]

Herald: Your majesty please! Send someone else. Send one of your knights. Send Sir Jack. He would gladly go for you.

King: No, I'm going after him myself. Begin the feast without me. I hope to return soon.

[Crystal, Jack, Abby, and Herald take table and chairs offstage with them as King puts on armor. King exits right, tree props go up. Enter thieves with Joe from left. They are tying Joe to the tree.]

Bandit 1: Make sure that knot is nice and tight. We wouldn't want our prisoner to escape.

Bandit 2: Yeah, we can't let him get away before we get our ransom. We're going to be rich!

Joe: I wouldn't count on it.

Bandit 1: And why is that?

Joe: First of all, I doubt anyone will notice I'm gone. But even if they do, it's not like they would care. Why would anyone pay money to set me free?

Bandit 2: What about the king? Doesn't he need someone to farm the land?

Joe: Anyone could do that. He will just find a new farmer.

Besides, the only time the king has ever seen me, he caught me stealing something that belonged to him. I don't think the king will rescue me. He probably thinks it's better that I'm gone.

[Enter King left]

King: Release that man!

Joe: The king!

Bandit 1: Release him?

Bandit 2: Or what?

King: Release him, or suffer the consequences.

[King pulls out sword, prompting the bandits to do the same. They go to fight, but the king quickly knocks the swords out of the bandits' hands. They run and king chases them. After the chase, the two bandits collide on stage and fall over. King moves over to them.]

King: Leave this kingdom at once and never return.

Bandits: Y-y-y-y-yessir. [They get up and run, exit left. King goes over to set Joe free.]

Joe: Your majesty! Thank you for rescuing me! What great luck that you found me while you were on your way to... what were you doing out here?

King: Rescuing you.

Joe: Wait, you came all the way out here to rescue me? But how did you know I was lost?

King: My herald went to your house last night to invite you to my birthday when he found the ransom note.

Joe: You were going to invite me to your party? Even after I stole the queen's ice cream?

King: Yes.

Joe: And then when you found out that I was captured, you left the rest of the guests at the party just to rescue me?

King: Yes.

Joe: But you're the king. You have all kinds of important things to do. You have strong knights like Sir Jack, brilliant scientists like Dr. Abby, and rich friends like Lady Crystal. Why would you care about someone as small and unimportant as me?

King: Joe, you are very important to me. I know that you think your sin was the only time I've seen you, but I've actually seen much more. When you needed a new plow, I knew you

had a need. When everyone else was showing off their talents, you had compassion on me. I don't just care about my strongest, smartest, or richest subjects. I care about all of you.

Joe: So you've been there the whole time? That was you who gave me the plow? And you who I ate with yesterday?

King: It was indeed. And as great as that was, I think it's about time we enjoyed a birthday feast.

Joe: Sounds great!

[They exit left. Bring back table, party guests. Abby, Crystal, and Jack are all sitting at the table. Herald is in the background]

Jack: What do you think is happening?

Crystal: I don't know, those bandits can be tough.

Abby: I hope the king is OK.

Herald: [Looks right, sees king] Ladies and gentleman, King Ben!

[King and Joe enter right. Everyone rises and claps.]

King: My subjects, today was supposed to be a day of celebration for my birthday, but we actually have a second reason to celebrate. Joe was lost, but now I have found him. Let us rejoice! [They all celebrate, sit down, enjoy the feast]