

## ***A Tale of Two Jesters Cast List***

*4 Male, 6 Female, 2 M/F, Extras*

**KING (M)** a man surrounded by women who is desperate for someone to understand him.

**QUEEN (F)** she loves a good joke, which means she didn't hear it from the Jester.

**PRINCESS SARCASTA (F)** she's sarcastic for no real reason. I guess she's ironic, too.

**PRINCESS BARBIE (F)** she has roughly the same personality and IQ as the doll.

**PRINCESS HILLARY (F)** she really hates dad jokes—and that's all she hears from the Jester.

**JESTER (M)** the royal Jester. After 10 years, he finally gets a holiday.

**MITCHELL (M)** a temporary Jester who doesn't really know jokes—or his audience.

**MIRANDA (F)** Mitch's sister and joke-writer. She just wants the credit.

**ROZZY (F)** a scullery maid who, like all the women of the castle, needs a break from the Jester.

**COURTIER 1 (M)** nobility attending the banquet.

**COURTIER 2 (M/F)** nobility attending the banquet.

**COURTIER 3 (M/F)** nobility attending the banquet.

**EXTRAS (M/F)** guards, servers, & pages

## **Sample Pages**

### **FANFARE AND WELCOME**

*(When the guests have been seated, a second BRASS FANFARE will signal all entertainers to clear the hall. Lights up as JESTER enters the main stage.)*

JESTER:

Wes hale, to our good company!

We welcome you most heartily!

Forget your cares; do not be wary.

The night is young; the mood is airy.

We've brought the ale and killed the boar;

The year is sixteen twenty-four.  
And now it is my great delight (*Enter ROZZY.*)  
To welcome you this merry night!

ROZZY: Jester? You're still here? I thought . . . you would be gone by now.

JESTER: Well, the King asked me to welcome our noble guests before I left.

ROZZY: And then you're leaving?

JESTER: (*Confused.*) Uh, yes, I just need to finish packing my things.

ROZZY: (*Escorts JESTER side-stage.*) I'll help you pack. You really must get going. The King has decided that you need a holiday.

JESTER: He did indeed. (*Beat.*) Although it seemed to be decided by the Queen. And the Princesses. And the serving girls. And ... you.

ROZZY: Well, after all, you haven't taken a break since you arrived here 15 years ago.

JESTER: I've only been here 10 years.

ROZZY: Only 10? My, how time really ... slows down when you're—

KING: (*Entering.*) Jester, there you are! I thought I'd see you off.

ROZZY: He was just leaving.

KING: I will surely miss you, Jester.

(*ROZZY throws up her hands and exits.*)

JESTER: That's very kind, your majesty, but you must not be so downcast. I will be gone for only a week.

KING: It will seem longer. Let's face it, Jester. You are the only one who understands me. I am surrounded by women.

JESTER: You are surrounded by the very flower of womanhood. Their perfumed presence—

KING: But that's just it! Flowers! Perfume! Doilies! I have doilies on the armrests of the royal throne!

JESTER: Doilies?

KING: The Queen said something about the grease stains on my sleeves tarnishing the gold.

JESTER: Well, a few feminine touches around the castle—

KING: A few feminine touches? Potpourri in bowls. Embroidered pillows that you cannot lay your head on. I've got a skirt on my bed, Jester. A skirt!

JESTER: Well, skirts on beds can be handy. You know, for, uh, if the bed ever wants to curtsy.

KING: I still dream of my bachelor days.

JESTER: *(Both reminisce.)* The bearskin rugs before the fireplace—

KING: The deer antler candelabras—

JESTER: The tables and chairs were wine casks—

KING: With the wine still in them.

JESTER: Ah, those were the days.

KING: And now? And now I am the butt of jokes as far away as Rome. Do you know what the bishop there calls me? "*Abbas of tantum filia.*"

JESTER: Abs of titanium, sire? That is hardly an insult. I have heard of abs of steel, but titanium?

KING: It's Latin. It means "father of only daughters." I told the clerics in Rome that I had three daughters, and they were buying me drinks left and right. In sympathy! They also spent a good deal of time toasting celibacy.

JESTER: My lord, all you need is someone to commiserate with in my absence. *(To audience.)* I seek a man with only daughters. Or many daughters. Is there some noble among you who can console our King? *(JESTER chooses someone, preferably close to the stage. See PRODUCTION NOTES.)* You, sir. *(Has the audience member stand.)* Your King is in need of male companionship. You have daughters. Come, let us cheer up our king. *(To KING.)* My king, may I introduce another sonless—

KING: Sonny, you say? *(To audience member.)* Sonny. That is an unusual name. From what noble line are you descended? *(Waits for response. Improv with answer.)* I don't believe I've heard of that house. You're not from France, are you? *(Improv with answer.)* A man with only daughters in your court, eh?

JESTER: You see, my King, you are not alone. Here is a noble whose castle is also filled with ladies.

KING: Tell me, then. How many women are in your household? *(Audience member answers. If it is more than four, react with great shock. Continue to give your sympathy.)* Bring some ale for this poor lord! *(PAGE enters with goblet and pitcher. Pours into goblet and hands it to*

*audience member.*) Drink up, good man! I understand your pain. Do not misunderstand. I love my queen and daughters. But, tell me, sir, what do you do to survive your days surrounded by women? *(Improvise with answer. To PAGE.)* More ale. *(PAGE refills the goblet.)* Where do you escape when your wife wants to do something . . . hopelessly sentimental? For example, my wife loves to go to the barn to watch newborn chickens get flicked playfully by their mothers.

JESTER: No! Not a chick-flick?

KING: Exactly. What do you do, good man, when your wife wants to see a chick-flick? *(Improvise with answer.)* Now be honest. Do you ever find yourself, not exactly crying, but maybe choking up a bit during a chick-flick? *(Improvise with answer. To PAGE.)* More ale. Give this man plenty of ale. *(PAGE refills the goblet. JESTER encourages the man to keep drinking.)*

KING: And, good sir, how do you handle that most dangerous—

JESTER: Perilous—

KING: Treacherous of questions? What do you say, honestly now, what do you say when your wife asks you that dreaded question . . . “Does this dress make me look fat?” *(Improvise with answer.)*

JESTER: *(To KING.)* Do you even want to answer that question?

KING: Of course not! Take my advice. It is wiser to do as I do. *(Looks around.)* I go on a crusade. After four or five years, she will have forgotten the question. *(To PAGE.)* More ale. *(PAGE refills goblet.)*

JESTER: Well, my King, it appears that you have found a kindred spirit here with Lord Sonny.

KING: Indeed, good Jester. In fact, I will avail myself of Lord Sonny’s wisdom while you are gone. *(To PAGE.)* Keep this man’s goblet full throughout the night. *(PAGE bows and exits. SONNY sits; JESTER returns to stage.)* Goodbye, Jester. You will be sorely missed. *(KING shakes his head as he exits.) Abbas of tantum filia!*

JESTER: To celibacy!

*(BRASS FANFARE.)*

JESTER: Ah. The rest of the court has arrived. Let me announce that before I depart. *(To the back of the hall.)*

Ready the meal and heat the wassail!

Bring forth the meat and finest of ale!

Blow the clarion! Singers appear!

The King and his court are drawing near! *(Exits.)*

**After the toasts with wassail ...**

KING: Where is our Jester? I am in need of some mirth.

QUEEN: My King, don't you remember? He is preparing for his long-overdue—

BARBIE: Way long-overdue—

HILLARY: Massively, very long-overdue—

SARCOSTA: Overdue, but we don't want the book back, overdue —

ALL LADIES: Holiday.

KING: Nonsense, I arranged for just a few jokes before he goes.

HILLARY: I'm sure he doesn't have time.

SARCOSTA: I'm mean, the guards are waiting to escort—

KING: *(JESTER enters.)* Look, here he is now. *(JESTER bows.)* Now, fill us with laughter before you depart.

QUEEN: We know you must be pressed for time—

BARBIE: We're sorry you have to leave.

SARCOSTA: We're sorry. You have to leave.

KING: *(Raising his voice.)* A joke, if you would, my Jester! Please! *(All LADIES hold their breath waiting for JESTER's response.)*

JESTER: Of course, my liege. *(All LADIES let out a stifled groan.)* Here's a new one. Why is it cheaper to throw a party at a haunted castle? Because the ghosts bring the boos. *(The KING laughs, but the LADIES are silent.)* Where do pirates get their hooks? Second hand stores. *(KING laughs even more.)* What do you call a beehive with no exit? Unbelievable! *(The KING is practically falling out of his throne; LADIES are silent.)*

HILLARY: I hate dad jokes.

JESTER: I've got a bunch of yo mama jokes. I could —

LADIES: No!

KING: *(Wiping his eyes.)* Oh, good Jester, you continue to amaze me. Whatever are we going to do without you?

JESTER: Well, your majesty, I could delay my holiday—

LADIES: NO!

QUEEN: That is, uh, Jester, you have been a faithful servant these past 20 years and—

JESTER: 10 years, actually.

QUEEN: 10 years?

SARCOSTA: More like 10 dog years.

HILLARY: Well, even 10 years without a break is asking too much of you. You really must take this holiday. It has taken us months to convince the King to give us—I mean, to give you a break.

JESTER: Well, they say that absence does make the heart grow fonder.

KING: A truer word was never spoken. I miss you already, Jester.

SARCOSTA: He actually has to leave before you can miss him.

KING: What was that?

HILLARY: *(Thinks fast.)* She said, “I can’t believe how much I’ll miss him!”

QUEEN: *(To JESTER.)* But not to worry. I’ve hired a temporary replacement for you.

JESTER: *(Surprised.)* You’ve hired a . . . replacement?

KING: A temporary replacement. Some rogue, no doubt. He came recommended by the Queen’s Great Aunt Agatha. *(Aside.)* As if anyone could make that harpy laugh.

QUEEN: Have the servants bring forth the meal. Then we will send for our new Jester.

JESTER: You mean temporary Jester.

BARBIE: Whatever you say. You can be on your way, good Jester.

HILLARY: Have a wonderful time!

SARCOSTA: Please forget to write.

JESTER: *(Reluctantly.)* Then I ... bid you farewell, your majesty. *(JESTER bows and exits.)*

*(BRASS FANFARE. The FIRST COURSE is served and ambient entertainers entertain guests at tables. When guests have had some time to eat their soup, the action begins again. Lights dim on ROYAL TABLE. Lights up on the main stage. MITCH and MIRANDA enter, looking around.)*

MIRANDA: *(Looking around.)* Are you sure this is going to work?

MITCH: Of course, I'm sure. This could be the big break we've been looking for. *(Looks around.)* Working for the King—can you believe it?

MIRANDA: Yes, that's what scares me.

MITCH: Oh, what's the worst that can happen?

MIRANDA: Well, we could be discovered, and we'd both lose our heads.

MITCH: You are such a Deborah Downer. You just keep feeding me jokes, and things will be fine.

ROZZY: *(Entering.)* How now, good sir, good lady!

MITCH: Good evening! I am the replacement Jester. The Queen asked me to come immediately, so here I am!

ROZZY: *(Rushes to hug MITCH.)* Oh, thank goodness you've come. You have no idea ... *(Notices MIRANDA.)* And, who's this?

MITCH: Oh, uh, this is Miranda. She's my . . . serving girl. *(MIRANDA looks shocked at MITCH.)* Yes. My serving girl. *(Eyes MIRANDA to play along.)*

ROZZY: Serving girl? How unusual. I've never known a Jester to have his own servant.

MITCH: That's just how good I am. I am the King of Jesters and the Jester to Kings.

ROZZY: That sounds so familiar.

MIRANDA: I believe Sir Kay said it first. My bro ... My master sometimes quotes other comic geniuses.

ROZZY: Anyway, as you can see, the banquet has begun. The King will call for you soon, so you'd better be ready.

MIRANDA: *(To MITCH.)* I thought you said we were early?

ROZZY: Your quarters are that way. *(Points off-stage.)*

MIRANDA: Let's go. *(Exits quickly with MITCH in tow.)*

ROZZY: Court Jester. Sounds familiar. Hmmm. I'd better get more wassail for the King. Now, did I put it in the chalice from the palace or the flagon with the dragon? *(Exits.)*