

Where mischief reigns, I follow: The King's Jester welcomes you to court

By: SleepyDreamyLullay

... = listener is speaking or general pause

[words] = sound effects and sounds

(words) = tone/mood/voice direction

{words} = replace with desired pronouns, subject, alternative etc. or do away with it as you please

***Speaker characterization is similar to the Mad Hatter: A lighthearted yet manic humor belying a dark sadism. They're the type of person to dance their way into trouble and sing their way out, toeing the line between danger and parody. The pursuit of comedy reigns supreme--- laughter fuels their every move, and they're the type to laugh hysterically still as they're dragged off to the gallows. Every action is performed with absurdity for the simple goal of satisfying their own amusement.**

Script Start

[Listener sits at a large feast table atop a dais, watching the festivities unfold. Evidence of merriment surrounds them: Clinking glasses and platters, overlapping conversations punctuated with the occasional peppering of laughter, and jaunty medieval music tying the atmosphere together]

[Despite the fanfare and debauchery, Listener's environment fails to enliven them, taking on an almost subdued and muffled quality as they detach themselves from the celebration--- physically and mentally, sounds as distant as their emotional state]

[From the din of indistinct party chatter that melds together into an indistinguishable tinnitus, the jingling of bells and a cheery voice announces the arrival of one special attendee--- The court Jester: late and irreverent]

(distantly from the left side of the room) Lords and Ladies! Lads, Lasses, and Asses, I have finally arrived!

... *[A brief pause at the interruption; The partygoers then promptly continue with their conversations, ignoring the Jester--- though some audibly groan in annoyance]*

[The Jester scans the crowd for their first victim]

(distantly from the far left side of the room)

Marchioness Wisdom! You and your husband are looking as marvelous as ever.
Marquess, did you dress yourself tonight?

...

I can tell. Opted for the big-boy pants, didn't you now? Finally learned how to do up laces on your own?

Oh, and who's *this* little one?

[A dog barks twice]

Marchioness, I didn't know you planned on bringing *both* your pets to the function tonight.

Purebred, I assume? Housebroken, I *hope*.

My, what a *beautiful* animal. Truly a magnificent beast--- oh, and that dog isn't half bad either!

[The Jester laughs as they cross the room to a different noble to harass]

(distantly from the far right side of the room) Duke Passion! I knew I recognized that *distinctive* figure. And where might Duchess Passion be?

...

Ah. Well far be it from me to judge a lady for her whims concerning her imperfect relationship.

(a long string of words, building up to---) Some might view it impetuous--- the impetus to imminent imputation of image-ruining implication. However, I think the greater scandal lies in *you*, Duke Passion: Imbecilic incompetence in all matters intimate, insipid and inconstant in everything but your impotence, often leaving the Duchess

(--- the punchline; pointed; very proudly wrought)--- *incomplete*.

...

... *[Silence; the punchline clearly doesn't land]*

...

(the Jester tries again) *incomplete*.

...

... *[Silence; the punchline still doesn't land]*

...

(tries again) Leaving the *Duchess*---

(gives up) Oh bother. Think no more on it, Passion--- you've clearly reached the limits of your wits.

Shoo, shoo. Surely you can understand the meaning of *that*.

...

[The Jester stalks off sulkily, settling themselves next to Listener to stew in their indignance]

(muttering to themselves; dramatic pouting) Doddling simpletons. Inbred *nitwits*.

Comedy is *dead*. *Dead* I say!

...

... *[The Jester broods in silence again]*

...

(abruptly; to Listener) *Incomplete*. Do you get it? The Duke always leaves the Duchess *incomplete*.

As in--- *unfinished*.

As in *she does not finish*.

(smug; pleased with themselves) Get it?

...

Did you now? Then why didn't I hear you laugh?

...

[The Jester chuckles abruptly and loudly, unnatural joviality tinged with a hint of madness]

Quite brave to declare the King's Jester *unfunny*.

(stage-whispering mischievously; warningly; slightly threateningly) That's bad luck you know.

[Bells jingle as The Jester cocks their head to the side, as if just now considering their conversation partner and realizing they don't know Listener]

... Or would you?

I don't recognize your face. You must be new to the court.

... *[The Jester pauses briefly to ruminare]*

[Jester snaps in an 'aha!' moment and throws back their head in a cackle, bells jingling with the movement]

I remember now! You're the new King's newly betrothed new-play new-thing!

How's that going so far? Do you find the King handsome? Have you kissed him yet?

[The Jester gives an exaggerated gasp]

(leaning in; wagging their brows suggestively; lowering their voice to a scandalous whisper) Have you done *more*??

...

(sobering) Oh. Right. You're completely correct. What a rude way of introducing myself! I'll try again:

(conversationally; completely serious)

Hi. Yes, hello. Greetings.

[Slight pause; as if about to ask a serious question]

(he doesn't) Have you kissed the King yet?

...

[The Jester snickers, finding amusement in annoying Listener and making them uncomfortable]

Neither am I a knave nor scoundrel nor any of the other *colorful* insults you've titled me.

I am called "Jester". Simple and straightforward. It's nice to meet you, your Majesty.

...

(intrigued) Oh?

(loving the drama) *Oh*.

Oh, the King will *hate* that. That's *hilarious*.

[The Jester cackles madly again]

Though drawing such lines may spell trouble for you, *emissary*. You may find that insisting upon such a title to distance yourself from the peerage will come with negative consequences. You already stick out so much--- reminding the nobility that you're merely here as a result of diplomatic arrangements will earn you powerful enemies.

(ominously; prompting) Especially in this court.

...

(in answer; still ominously) Well... what is an *emissary* to a court of gods incarnate?

...

You poor thing. A sacrificial lamb to our ominous *savagery*, are you? Your country sent you in so woefully uninformed. You haven't got a clue. Though it's a relief to see some of our ways remain a mystery to foreign meddling yet.

(with a storyteller's voice; engaging and filled with awe)

You see: Each and every titled noble here is a *god*, reincarnated. When you embody your position fully, names mean nothing. Your identity ties inseparably to your divinity, to your domain, to your title, to you. You simply *are*.

I am Jester. Japes and mischief in the flesh. Our King is simply known as "The King". Power and Authority made mortal.

And the rest of the guests here boast similar manifests: Passion, Virtue, Wisdom, Strength. Pure distillations made Divine.

(abruptly irreverent once more; unserious; with a dismissive flap of their hand) At least--- that's the *tradition*. The *belief*.

I, for one, find it hard to believe myself surrounded by living gods when not a single one appreciates clever wordplay. See here:

...

(loudly to the room) Is it not ironic---

[The party chatter and music stop to listen to the Jester's joke]

--- that our Lord *Generosity*, has coffers that overflow, and yet his other treasuries run quite lean? Where in coin he boasts surplus of supply, he maintains poorer accounting beneath the belt. I say! A richer *dowry* has never been seen by one with *endowment* so sparingly bestowed!

...

... [Silence--- The nobles don't get the joke]

...

(loudly; obnoxiously) His *dick* is *small!!*

...

[The room erupts into hoity-toity laughter then resumes the party]

...

See? Only the crudest and simplest of jokes for this crowd--- At times I feel like I'm spelling something out to the illiterate. I'm not saying they're the dumbest people alive, but if ever a plague wiped out the *true* dumbest people on this planet, I should think a vast majority of our crowd here would have a considerable number of family members to mourn.

Also, in matters I cannot express verbally, I certainly *think* it 😊

... But I suppose it doesn't matter *what* I think. Nor you for that matter, either.

These are the rules set forth in a game where we are only but pawns. One must adapt and strategize to the tools they are given.

And so I am the Jokester of the Court. I Jest.

We court Jesters are *essential*, you see. A long-lived Jester is seen as a sign of a healthy, thriving, court.

...

[Laugh; jingling bells as they shake their head]

You wouldn't be the first to wish death upon me.

...

Oh, please. How am I to know? I've lost count of the number of assassination attempts on me. Somewhere in the hundreds-ish. And *that* is a sign of a prospering court as well!

See: none of our titles are permanent. No god is definitively tied to a singular individual or bloodline. Passion is Passion until someone else is Passion. You hold your position until someone simply takes it from you--- like your fiancé: The King will always be the most powerful person in court. If someone kills him?

[The Jester shrugs]

Well then clearly he *wasn't* the most powerful person in court. Clearly the murderer
themselves is worthier of the title.

I myself am necessary as a fixture for superstitious reasons. It's in the King's best
interest to have the same Jester for as long as possible, but there are no rules against
killing me. If I were to die, I would simply be replaced. Anyone here can be.

And so on and on the game of murder and backstabbing goes...

(sighing; dreamily) Isn't that so much *fun*?

...

(seriously; sobering)

Ah... I'm inclined to agree.

As one tied to The King's position, especially so since you're a *foreigner* with no ties or
alliances--- his fate does seem to be... your fate.

(abruptly jovial once more)

Well! How delightfully depressing! It surely makes you rethink how you're currently
approaching this situation, doesn't it *emissary*?

(done with the conversation; cheerily, despite bleak ending) I do believe I've exhausted
the comedic potential of this conversation, and so I shall be off to greener pastures of
funnier material and hopefully more appreciative audiences.

...

[Bells jingle once more as Jester cocks their head to the side, reassessing Listener]

[Jester abruptly laughs that same, not-so-sane laugh]

Perhaps I've underestimated you. You *do* have a sense of humor--- a mean-spirited
vicious one, at that.

My *favorite* kind.

Alright, then. Ask away.

...

[More laughter]

Advice? From a *Jester*?

I thought *I* was meant to be the most absurd fool in the room!

...

[Jester's laughter slowly fades to a tense silence]

(lightly, affecting joviality but with a cool cruelty lurking underneath) Razor-sharp wit heralds razor-sharp intellect, evidently.

While I will neither confirm nor deny your accusations, I *will* say this: There are reasons other than luck, whim, and amusement that a Jester stays alive. Knowledge and true understanding beget faithful parody, do they not?

Pawns have the potential to become the most powerful piece on the board, after all.

(leaning in closer) So then, fellow pawn. *Emissary*. What knowledge do you require for such a promotion?

...

Well if it's an ally you search for, I can think of no 3 finer candidates:

You could try Lord Trust, who, by nature of his duties, manages most relationships between the peerage--- mostly financial, business, and marital affairs... Though that man is so stupid, he wouldn't know his head from his ass if one didn't constantly spew shit.

I'll leave it up to you to decide which end.

You might enjoy the company of Lady Legacy, well versed in the histories of our court, the various events that befell the families and gods here, and any such boring details no one can be bothered to remember. But be warned--- she fancies herself a scholar and charmer, but proves to be nothing short of an *error*-dite and truly charismat-*isn't*.

I think you might also find luck in The General, Lord of War, if you're into that sort of power. He's obnoxiously prideful, however. Will boast of his superior physical prowess and strip to the waist as he challenges others to outdo him in number of pull-ups, which he unfailingly wins. However, a keen eye will reveal a distinct discrepancy: Contrary to his opponent, The General will be doing Chin-ups rather than Pull-ups. I point this out because there lies a physiological difference in the effort needed to perform both exercises.

Chin ups are easy.

Like his mom.

[Jester snickers to themself]

Well then? Which do you believe will help you limp your way to the top? Who will you drag with you to glory and power?

...

(grinning wickedly; with zeal) *Excellent choice.*

(leaning in closer; a mischievous whisper) Though I'm afraid my services aren't for sale.

(stepping backward, leaving the company of Listener)

Yet, that is. You're the only one in this whole dreary court that can make me truly laugh. Make waves, *Emissary*. Only then will I deign to perform with the tools of my act.

...

(fading away, disappearing into the party crowd) Where mischief reigns, I follow.

[Jester cackles one last time then disappears entirely. The laughter seems to echo ominously and unnaturally in their absence]

****Script End****