

## The Wise Queen

Characters:

King Therold of There

Queen of There

("There" is the name of the fictitious kingdom that King and Queen rule. "Here" is the name of the adjacent kingdom, across the river.)

(Queen is on stage. King enters, flustered.)

Queen: What is it?

King: I was on my way to Here...

Queen: To Where?

King: No – not all the way to Where. I was going to *Here*.

Queen: Oh, I see. From here.

King: No! Not from *Here*. I was going *to* Here. From here, our good Kingdom of There.

Queen: Oh, I see. You had me lost for a minute, there.

King: My *name* isn't "There." I am King Therold of There\*. "You're Their-ness," if you must. You can't call a king by the name of his kingdom. How do you think Harold would feel if I marched all the way over to Here and said, "I'm here, Here." He wouldn't have it for a minute! Or if his subjects said, "Hey, Har, There is here." It wouldn't make any sense at all! No, I would need to say, "I am here, King Harold of Here, your faithful friend, King Ther of There."

Queen: (Rolls eyes.) Oh, all right. So anyway, what happened on the way to Here?

King: Well. I had reached the river and my subjects were about to put us in the boats, when would you believe it! The river suddenly sprung up like a wall of water! It was as glassy as a mirror and as wet as an ocean, but it was as hard as stone – it wouldn't let us pass!

Queen: Oh my. How will anyone get to Here, now?

King: I have no idea. I guess people on our side will just have to stay here, in There.

Queen: And the people of the other side will have to stay in Here.

King: Well, how will we feed them all, if they're all in here in this castle?

Queen: No! They'll have to stay in *Here* – in the kingdom of Here, on the other side of the river.

King: Ohhhhhh.

(Pause.)

Queen: Well?

King: Oh, yes! Well. The water sprung up like a glassy wall. It was like a mirror.

Queen: A mirror? How odd.

King: Not half so odd as what he said!

Queen: Who?

King: No, Sir Who didn't say a thing. I'm talking about the river.

Queen: (Rolls eyes.) Any-hoo...

King: No. As far as I know, Who is the only person named "Who" in the kingdom. Anyway, the river said, "No matter what you do, I'm more than a match for you."

Queen: So, what did you do?

King: My greatest swordsman pulled out his sword to cut through the water. But would you believe it! The water wall stuck out a sword of its own, made entirely of water, but hard as steel! He knocked Sir Sword's sword entirely out of his hand!

Queen: Out of his hand!

King: Out of his hand!

Queen: My, my.

King: Yes. I don't know what to do.

Queen: A mirror, you say?

King: Yes. Whatever am I going to do...

(Both think.)

Queen: I have an idea...

King: I could always...

Queen: I think I have an idea...

King: Well, no, that wouldn't work...but... I know!

Queen: I have an idea!

King: I'll be right back.

(King exits. Queen huffs. King re-enters a few moments later.)

Queen: Well, what did you do?

King: My greatest strongman rolled up his sleeves to try to punch his way through the water. But would you believe it! The water brought out a great fist, made entirely of water, and punched him all the way to his home in the middle of There!

Queen: Oh my! Is he all right?

King: He was strong enough to land with hardly a scratch. Unfortunately, he landed right on his chicken coop. Mrs. Strength was not happy...

Queen: My, my! Whatever are you going to do next?

King: Well, I'm not exactly sure...

Queen: A mirror, you say...

King: I could always...

Queen: I have an idea that I think might work...

King: I know what I'll do!

Queen: But I have an idea!

King: I'll be right back.

(King exits.)

Queen: (Huffs.) He's never going to listen to me! I have an idea.

(Queen pulls out a storage ottoman, covers the outside of it in a blanket, and makes a sign that says "The Wise One" to place on the ottoman. She then exits and returns with a pitcher of water, and pours it into the ottoman.)

(King re-enters)

King: Would you believe it! Our new wind turbine constructor even tried to give it a go. He had a travel size wind turbine in his riding bag.

Queen: A travel sized...what?

King: Yes! He pulled it out and blew, with all his might.

Queen: And let me guess...

King: Would you believe it, too! The river formed great cheeks – made entirely of water – and *blew* him all the way to the *far* side of There!

Queen: Wow!

King: I know! At least with Sir Strong, it saved him the walk home. But Sir Blows is going to have to walk *twice* as far!

Queen: Twice as far!

King: Twice as far!

Queen: Well, what are you going to do?

King: Oh, don't worry – in his job interview he told me he likes walking.

Queen: Not about that!

King: About what, then?

Queen: About the giant wall of water!

King: Ohhhhh! Well...

Queen: I have an idea.

King: Let me think...

Queen: I

King: There might be a...

Queen: have

King: What if I...

Queen: An

King: I could always...

Queen: Idea!

King: Hm...

Queen: (To self) He's never going to listen to my idea.

King: Hm...

Queen: (To box) What's that?

King: (To Queen) What's that?

Queen: (Listening to box.) Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Oh. Oh, I see.

King: What *is* that?

Queen: There's a very wise man trapped at the bottom of this well.

King: The bottom of the... Where did that come from?

Queen: I don't know. It just appeared.

King: (Intrigued) It just appeared? When?

Queen: While you were gone, trying to fix the wall of water – the one that you say is just like a mirror.

King: Yes...I still don't know what to do about that...

Queen: I have an idea.

King: Oh, I know! I'll ask the wise man in the well that appeared in the middle of my living room while I was gone!

Queen: (Rolls eyes. To self.) Of course.

(Queen moves up stage and hides her mouth as king approaches the well.)

King: Wise man. I have a very important question for you.

Queen (in funny voice): You may ask three questions.

King: (Looks around, surprised to actually hear a voice.) Ahem. Yes. Well. I thought that was for genies.

Queen (in funny voice): Umm...yes, well, it applies to very wise men as well.

King: Oh. I see. I did not know that. Anyway. I have a problem, O Wise One.

Queen (in funny voice): What seems to be your dilemma?

King: Well, I was on my way to Here...

Queen (in funny voice): Yes, from your kingdom of There.

King: Exactly! Anyway. On my way, I was about to cross the river. Suddenly, the river sprung up like a great wall of water. It was exactly like a mirror, and hard as stone. It wouldn't let us pass!

Queen (in funny voice): Tell me more.

King: Well, it fought off my fiercest swordsman with a blade made entirely of water. It sent my strongest strongman all the way to the middle of There with a punch from a fist made entirely of water. And just now, it sent my smartest wind turbine constructor all the way to the far end of the kingdom by blowing out of cheeks made entirely of water!

Queen (in funny voice): A mirror, you say...

King: Yes! Well, anyway. What should I do?

Queen (in funny voice): It seems to me that the river acts exactly like a mirror.

King: Yes! What should I do?

Queen (in funny voice): What does your wife have to say about it?

King: My wife? Well, I have no idea! But what should I do?

Queen (in funny voice): You have now asked your three questions. And since you did not allow me to answer the other ones, I can now only give you one answer.

King: What?!

Queen (in funny voice): That is four questions. You did not allow me to answer the three. Good bye.

King: Wait! No! You can answer! I promise! Wise man? Wise man? Hello? No – come back! (To Queen) He's gone!

Queen: (Shrugs)

King: Well, what do you have to say about this?

Queen: Send me.

King: Down the well? To get the wise man back?

Queen: No! Send me to the wall.

King: Why?

Queen: Because I *told* you. I have an idea. And besides – the wise man asked you what I thought about it.

King: Well...all right. But don't take too long. And don't get blown all the way to Kingdom Come. I don't exactly feel like coming to get you.

Queen: All right. (Exits.)

King: (Looks around. To well.) Hello? Wise man? Hellooooooooo! Come back! (To self, looking in pockets.) There's got to be... Ah! Yes. There's one. (Tosses coin into well.)

Well: Ouch!

King: (Looks up, startled.) Wise man? Wise maaaaaaaan!

(Queen re-enters. King is still bent over well, trying to call for the wise man. Perhaps she watched him for a bit and waited until he tossed the coin to say, "Ouch," just to tease him. Alternatively, you could just make it someone off stage and make it a total anomaly, a mystery and joke to the audience.)

Queen: (Clears throat.)

King: Oh! You're back. How did it go?

Queen: It's fixed.

King: It's *fixed*? How is it fixed?

Queen: I fixed it.

King: You *what*?

Queen: Yes. I fixed it.

King: How?

Queen: You told me the river came up like a mirror. The swordsman got defeated when the river acted like a sword, better than himself. The strongman got defeated when the river acted like a strong arm, stronger than himself. The wind turbine constructor got defeated when the river acted like the wind, more powerful than his own wind turbines would be.

King: Yes...

Queen: And what did the river say to you when it first appeared?

King: No matter what you do, I'm more than a match for you.

Queen: Right. So, the river was acting like a mirror. It was taking whatever the person in front of it did, and doing it better. So I simply walked up to it and said, "I'm a bridge-maker. And I'm going to make the greatest bridge across you that you've ever seen."

King: And?

Queen: And the river itself, turned into a bridge. *And*, it was so determined to beat me, that it even covered its bridge with logs and rocks and mud. I'm sure it's the strongest bridge I have ever seen.

King: Really?

Queen: Really. That bridge will be there for a long time. And the people of There and Here will be able cross over to Here or There as much as they please.

King: Well, how about that!

Queen: How about what?

King: The wise man was right after all! (To well) Wise maaaaaaaan!

Queen: (Rolls eyes)

*End.*