

King Rube is sitting at the head of the table, dressed in blue and wearing a crown. GREGORY LIMPWICK is dressed in blue, standing to the King's right. VERITY enters in a blue dress, carrying a basket.

VERITY

(Curtseys)

Thank you for seeing me, your Highness.

KING RUBE

The daughter of my Chief Sorceress Elsie is always welcome. Damsel Verity, may I introduce my Chief Prevaricator, Sir, Limpwick.

VERITY

It's an honor, Sir Limpwick.

(Curtseys)

GREGORY

The pleasure is all mine.

KING RUBE

I understand you have information for me that could affect my chances of winning the upcoming ultimate king election.

VERITY

Yes, Sire, I have in my basket, what I believe to be, the last egg in all of the Kingdom of Ninny.

(GREGORY begins nervously keeping an eye on Verity and her basket.)

KING RUBE

The last egg in all of Ninny? That's nonsense. Ninnies are required to eat eggs at least once a day. We couldn't be out of eggs. Limpwick, do you know anything about such nonsense?

GREGORY

I specialize in nonsense, Sire, and since I know nothing of this it must be a hoax. And although a hoax may often be nonsense, nonsense is never a hoax.

VERITY

I pray, Sir Limpwick, that it is a hoax, but I fear otherwise. I have visited every market and every farm in Ninny, and this is the single egg I could find.

GREGORY

Damsel Verity, even if your claim should prove to be true, we have plenty of sacred chickens to lay more eggs. So, off you go. There's nothing to worry about.

(GREGORY attempts to escort VERITY out, but SHE struggles against him.)

VERITY

But, Sire, in my quest to find this single egg I found not a single chicken.

KING RUBE

What...?

GREGORY

(Still trying to escort Verity to the door.)

That cannot be, your Highness. I'm sure Damsel Verity neglected to look in every corner of the Kingdom.

VERITY

No, I searched in every crack and every corner, Sir Limpwick. There seems to be no chickens left in all of Ninny.

(Finally breaks free.)

KING RUBE

(Stands)

This is very bad, Limpwick. Do you know what will happen if my brother beats me in the ultimate king election? Do you?

GREGORY

Yes, Sire.

KING RUBE

Do you?

GREGORY

I said yes.

KING RUBE

Well, I'm going to tell you. I will be forced to eat chicken. You better not let that happen.

GREGORY

Not to panic, Sire. We will do what we always do, blame King Dupe.

VERITY

This problem can be easily remedied. I have an egg. All we have to do is ask King Dupe to lend us a chicken to sit upon it and hatch it. Then use the newly hatched chick to restore the supply.

GREGORY

Are you suggesting that the King and his brother work together to solve this?

VERITY

Sure, why not?

KING RUBE

Because it would require compromise.

GREGORY

Damsel Verity, if what you tell us is true, we don't have time to waste on sensible solutions. Sire, the ultimate king election is three days away. We must get started aggressively pointing the finger of blame at King Dupe.

KING RUBE

Yes! We must out point Dupe.

GREGORY

We cannot afford to let down our fingers.

VERITY

Sire, please? The King Burger School of Culinary Arts has closed because there are no eggs for omelets. Bacon and sausage sales are way down because people have turned to cold gruel for breakfast.

KING RUBE

I'm sure there is some hardship and suffering, but I will not spare a few people their misery if it means I must compromise my ego.

VERITY

But, Sire, people are oversleeping because their cocks no longer wake them.

KING RUBE

I haven't heard anyone complaining loudly about that.

VERITY

Just because you don't listen doesn't mean there's not a problem.

KING RUBE

Damsel Verity, how am I supposed to believe I'm always right, if I talk to people who disagree with me?

GREGORY

Sire, I have already developed a plan of prevarication for the election campaign. It makes no real sense and sounds logical. All I have to do is tweak it a little to make it appear as if we have this issue under control.

KING RUBE

Oh, wonderful, let's hear the tweaked version.

GREGORY

The Annual Ninny versus Boob Jousting Festival is the day before the election and everyone from both kingdoms will be gathered there. My plan is to put up a giant billboard at the festival entrance which reads, "King Rube is the only responsible king in Democracy, because being responsible doesn't mean stepping up and taking charge, it means stepping back and leveling charges."

KING RUBE

That's outstanding!

VERITY

Sire, this problem requires action not a prevarication campaign.

KING RUBE

You've obviously never ducked responsibility, Damsel Verity. What else have you got, Limpwick?

GREGORY

Next to the booth of libation we put a second billboard with a picture of you holding a stein of ale. It will read, "King Rube is the strong leader Democracy needs, because true strength doesn't come from lifting weights, it comes from lifting spirits."

KING RUBE

You're on fire, Limpwick.

VERITY

Sire, that's just election blabber, it doesn't address the issue of eggs and chicken.

GREGORY

I'm not finished. Here's where I've done the tweaking. We hand out fliers to everyone at the festival which say, "Put a mask over King Dupe's face and he looks like a thief; put a chicken in his hand and he looks like a chicken thief. Do you need any more proof that King Dupe is the thief who stole our chickens?"

(Defeated, VERITY exits unnoticed by the others.)

KING RUBE

(Excited)

Somebody get me a blanket. I've just been given a case of the chills.

(Gives a shiver)

End of Scene

ACT 1

SCENE 3

SETTING:

The next day, the table is set like a desk running right to left. On the desk are scrolls, pieces of parchment, a quill and ink. There is a chair behind the desk and two more in front. A large picture of King Dupe, in a red robe, sits on an easel SR. The flag of Boob is hanging on the wall behind the desk. The flag is the silhouette

of a chicken placed above the word “BOOB”,
set on a field of red.

AT RISE:

Ralph Smith, wearing a Tudor hat and red puffy
shirt, enters carrying a certificate in a frame. He
considers several locations on the desk to place
the certificate and finally settles on one. LISA
enters carrying a page of parchment.

LISA

Ralph, I need your help.

RALPH

Lisa, my sweet, I am yours to command.

LISA

That’s what I’m counting on.

RALPH

Tell me, my Darling, do you notice anything new around here?
(Glances at the certificate and back at Lisa)

LISA

(Without looking around)

Nope. Now, Ralph, I need you to -

RALPH

Something on my desk, maybe?
(Gestures overtly to the certificate)

LISA

I already said no.

RALPH

(Picks up the framed certificate)

Are you sure?

LISA

I don’t see anything. Now you know I don’t like it when you bark at me, Ralph.

RALPH

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to bark. I just wanted you to see this.

(Hands her the certificate)

LISA

(Doesn't take it)

What is it?

RALPH

It's my diploma from Knight School

LISA

(Takes a quick glance at it.)

It's not a real diploma, Ralph.

RALPH

Well, it kind of is. It shows I passed all the written exams.

LISA

It doesn't make you a full-fledged Knight, and you know that I can only marry a full-fledged Knight.

RALPH

Yes, but now all I have to do to become a full-fledged knight is either save a virgin in distress, slay a dragon, or die in battle. After that it's all wedding bells.

(Takes Lisa's hand)

How about a kiss?

(Puckers his lips)

LISA

(Pulls away)

I think a kiss would be so much more romantic if I wait until after you die in battle.

RALPH

But I would be dead.

LISA

Nothing is more romantic than a man sacrificing his life for his one true love. Consider Romeo and Juliet.

RALPH

Well, Juliet also sacrificed her life for love. Would you be willing to do that for me?

LISA

I would be honored to sacrifice your life for my love. Now, can we get back to me and what I want?

RALPH

Of course my sweet.

LISA

You know that, as Chief Prevaricator for King Dupe, it is my job to make certain that he wins the upcoming ultimate king election.

RALPH

And you're doing an amazing job.

LISA

Yes, I know. Now, last week, in an effort to boost poll numbers, King Rube began giving away a dozen eggs to every Ninny who purchased a pound of bacon.

RALPH

He's using pork to buy votes? What are you going to do?

LISA

I have a plan to provide a chicken to every Boob who buys a bottle of white wine.

RALPH

Good idea, that will surely get the people to vote for King Dupe. Everyone loves free chicken.

LISA

No, we're not giving away free chicken. People will pay for the chicken and wine up front. Then we will refund the cost of the chicken back to them at the end of the sale.

RALPH

Wouldn't it be easier to merely give the chicken away to start with?

LISA

No, the king is firm on this. People need to pay their own way. There will be no Royal handouts.

RALPH

But we're giving them their money back.

LISA

Exactly! That way the people will want to vote for King Dupe because he gave them chicken, but it won't cost anybody anything. It's one of those, win, wins.

RALPH

I'm worried there might be a flaw in the plan.

LISA

(Challenging)

Are you saying my plan is stupid?

RALPH

No, of course not! It's a brilliant plan. I love it. I'm certain it will have everyone in Boob voting for King Dupe.

LISA

Now, it's just a formality, but because you are Director of Vendors and Markets I need you to sign off on it.

RALPH

Sure, no problem.

LISA

(Lays the paper in front of Ralph)

Just sign here. There's no need to read it.

RALPH

(Signs and hands the paper back to Lisa)

Say, I wonder if this qualifies me as having saved a virgin in distress?

(LISA rudely turns and exits)

RALPH

(Yells after her)

Have a good day.

(RALPH returns to his desk as VERITY enters wearing a red dress and carrying her basket.)

VERITY

Excuse me. Are you Ralph Smith, Director of Vendors and Markets?

RALPH

(Stands)

Yes, what can I do for you?

VERITY

I am the Damsel Verity and I am looking for help with a serious problem.

RALPH

Sounds serious, why don't you sit down and tell me about it?

VERITY

If I may, I would rather stand.

RALPH

Very well, what can I do for you?

VERITY

Before I go into details I must know. Are you a man of honor, chivalry and bravery?

RALPH

I most certainly am.

VERITY

Are you sure? Because I have found lately that men of power tend to choose bravado above bravery.

RALPH

(Holds up his diploma)

I'm trained in honor, chivalry and bravery. This is my diploma from Knight School.

VERITY

Oh, you're a knight then?

RALPH

Not yet, but I will be as soon as I slay a dragon, die in battle, or save a - Say, are you by chance a virgin in distress who needs rescuing?

VERITY

Why would you ask such a thing?

RALPH

Because, if I could rescue a virgin in distress I would complete the requirements to become a knight.

VERITY

Are you saying if I were a virgin in distress you would be prone to help me?

RALPH

I would; for once I become a knight I can marry my one true love.

VERITY

(Scheming)

Then you would do almost anything to save a virgin in distress?