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The King of the Barnyard

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"I think the barnyard animals should have a king," said the donkey. "It would give more dignity to the yard."

"Why do we need a king?" asked the rooster. "I am the king of my flock."

"And I of mine," said the turkey gobbler.

"I think we're getting along just fine as we are," said the horse.

"But I mean a real king," insisted the donkey. "One who can settle disputes with superior judgment and rule in a graceful manner."

"It might be nice to have a king," chimed in the duck, always ready to agree with others.

"I have no interest in being king," said the dog.

"Nor do I," said the cat.

"Nor I, nor I," echoed from all sides.

"Let the donkey be king," suggested the duck, eager to please everyone. "Yes," agreed the cat. "If we must have a king, he's the one."

"Of course, the majority rules," said the donkey, trying not to show his delight at the thought of becoming king.

"You'll need a throne," said the horse, now engaged in the discussion since the matter was settled.

"Well, I should have been the queen," said the cow. "I have horns."

"The donkey has long ears," remarked the cat.

"But they're not as graceful-looking as my horns," frowned the cow.

"Not everyone is born to rule," sneered the donkey, looking down on the cow.

"We can make a throne by placing a keg on this soap-box and covering it with a blanket," suggested the horse. "But you should have a crown."



"You could use the water-pail," said the cow, "but his head has grown so large that it probably won't fit."

"How about this?" waddled the duck, holding an old straw hat rim in her bill.

"Perfect!" exclaimed the horse, crowning the donkey with it.

"And now you must have a scepter; here's the pitchfork," said the horse, handing it to the donkey. "Hold it with the tines up," he instructed.

The donkey stepped onto his throne and took his seat. "You must deliver a speech," said the cat.

"Indeed," added the dog, "tell us how good you intend to be."

The donkey stood up and addressed his "dear subjects."

"Who does he think we are, his subjects?" scoffed the rooster.

But the donkey ignored him and continued, "I am well aware of the honor you have bestowed upon me."

"Moo, moo," interrupted the cow.

Unfazed, the donkey carried on, "I shall strive to rule in a just and dignified manner, and I hope you will be loyal subjects and assist me."

"I wish he'd stop using that word 'subjects'," grumbled the rooster as the donkey sat back down.

"I, for one, won't support him," declared the turkey gobbler. "I already have enough to do."

But the horse exclaimed, "Long live the king!" and the others joined in. The donkey smiled, bowed, and felt like a great king.

However, trouble arose when the donkey requested pages to wait on him.

"I won't be a servant to him," objected the rooster.

"Nor will I," snorted the pig.

"Someone has to," said the horse. "I'm too big, but a king needs attendants."

"I suppose the dog and cat could," suggested the donkey. "They seem to get along well."

"What do you want us to do?" asked the cat.

"You must stay by the throne," said the donkey, "and whenever I address you, you must bow low and say 'Your Majesty' and follow my instructions."

The cat arched her back. "If you think I'm going to bow to you," she hissed, "you can think again. I won't bow to anyone." With that, she walked out of the barn.

"I don't think I'm interested in the role of a page," muttered the dog as he trotted off to his house.

Soon, the poor donkey found himself alone in his supposed glory. He was a king, but there was no one to rule over. He removed his crown and ventured out into the barnyard, but the animals paid him no attention. It became clear that he had become the laughing-stock of the yard. He had tried to elevate himself above the others and be a king, but his fall from grace was significant.

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