

SIMPLE PAST TENSE



The Tale of the Whiteface

Once there was an entertainer in the king's court who painted his face white, put on black clothing, and stopped speaking. He acted out, in perfect silence, all sorts of plays and silly things, and everyone who saw him laughed and applauded, for he was very good. Whiteface used no props; he could tell an entire story just by moving his hands and body, and making his face show all the right emotions. One day he pretended to be the king. He put on his imaginary crown, and everyone could see that he instantly became noble and wise and stern all at once. He took his imaginary scepter, adjusted his imaginary robes, and walked through the courtroom dispensing imaginary justice to imaginary criminals. Everyone laughed and tossed coins to him, for his imitation of the king's expressions was perfect. Then his face became wily, and he lifted his imaginary robes and tiptoed with exaggerated care, and everyone could tell that Whiteface meant that the king was going somewhere in secrecy. Whiteface made some hand-gestures that everyone understood meant *woman*, and a few people tittered while the rest watched in suspense. Even the king sat forward on his throne to watch carefully. Whiteface tiptoed across the room and stopped, and everyone could tell he was pretending to open a door very, very quietly. Now the king was frowning, but Whiteface didn't care. He opened his pants and stuck his hand inside. Whiteface's eyes got very concerned, and he groped around inside his pants frantically. Everyone except the king was laughing now, but when they noticed that the king was angry, they fell silent. Whiteface shrugged and closed his pants up again, and his face was woeful. "That's enough!" said the king, and he sent soldiers to drag Whiteface from the court in disgrace. But the queen gave Whiteface a gold coin and smiled to herself

READ THE TALE AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

1. What did the the entertainer do in the king's court?
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2. Was the entertainer successful making people laugh?
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3. How did the Whiteface tell the story?
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4. Could he show all the right emotions?
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5. What did he pretend to be one day?
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6. Could he successfully act out the king's expressions?
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7. What did the audience do?
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8. What was the king's first reactions?
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9. Was the king frowning? Was he angry?
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10. Did Whiteface care about the king's reactions?
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11. What did Whiteface do then?
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12. Was everyone laughing at him? Who wasn't?
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13. What did people in the room do when they saw the king was angry?
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14. What did the king say at last?
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15. What did the queen do? Why?
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