

THE KING'S RIDDLE

By Alisonder Arteban



King Ahmid was a selfish ruler, rarely happy and always in need of some form of entertainment. Once a day, he would ask his guards to bring before him one of the village peasants. Ahmid would offer up a riddle with the threat of taking the villager's oldest child into service if the peasant could not figure out its **solution**.

But all of that changed late one fall when a peasant named Brocken was **ushered** into the royal throne room.

"How may I be of service, Your Majesty?" asked Brocken from one knee, head bowed in respect.

King Ahmid chuckled at the peasant's attempt at **reverence**. "Brocken Tull, father to four sons and two daughters," he said, reading from a withered parchment. "Impressive. Seeing that you have many sons, I may just have several riddles for you."

"Whatever pleases you, Your Majesty," said Brocken. Terror pulsed through his veins at the thought of losing even one of his sons. But now the king sought to take many.

"Stand, peasant," Ahmid ordered. "Your first riddle is as follows: *What word is spelled incorrectly no matter how you write it?*"

The riddle didn't make any sense at all. No matter what word came to mind, Brocken knew that it could indeed be spelled correctly.

"Well?" Ahmid shouted. "What is your answer, peasant?"

When Brocken did not speak, the king let out a gaudy chuckle, his voice echoing off the chamber's walls.

"I shall expect your oldest son by nightfall," the king **proclaimed**.

"Sire," Brocken called out, suddenly having a crazy idea.

"What is it, peasant?" asked Ahmid, a look of annoyance stuck upon his face.

"Sire, may I use a piece of parchment for a moment?"

Confused and further annoyed, the king replied, "And I suppose you will be needing a quill and some ink as well."

"If I may," Brocken replied, bowing his head once more.

At the direction of the king, one of the guards **fetches** the items and handed them to Brocken.

"Be quick!" the king ordered the peasant.

Brocken, with nothing to lose, scribed a word upon the parchment. The answer seemed much too obvious; it couldn't be right. But he wasn't about to lose his oldest son without giving the riddle at least one try.

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"Would you please take this to the king?" he asked the nearest guard, knowing not to approach the king himself.

The guard did so, not looking at what Brocken had written.

The king took the parchment and peered down at the word that Brocken had written. Ahmid realized that, for the first time, someone had solved one of his riddles. The **notion** left him speechless, and so he dropped the parchment where he stood, turned and stormed out of the chamber.

Stunned by the event, one of the guards asked Brocken, "What did you write?"

Brocken crossed his arms and smiled. "The only word that is spelled incorrectly no matter how you write it is the word *incorrectly*."

It truly had been that simple. And to think that Brocken had almost not even given the riddle a try.



Vocabulary

Solution: *an answer to a problem*

Usher: *to guide someone somewhere*

Reverence: *deep respect for someone or something*

Proclaim: *to say or announce officially*

Fetch: *to go get or retrieve*

Notion: *an idea or belief about something*