

Consider All Eventualities

There was a king in Copenhagen. He was exploring the stalls of a market one day when he saw a fine tent with a notice outside, 'Wisdom for sale.' He asked the proprietor how much the wisdom cost.

"It isn't cheap. Wisdom costs £100 a portion," replied the young man.

The king thought this was expensive.

"I can't sell it for less," insisted the young man.

The king decided to buy a portion anyway and handed his money over.

The young man looked at the king thoughtfully.

"Consider all eventualities," he said.

That was all the king got for his money.

Eight days later, he called the royal barber to give him a shave.

"I warn you," he said to the barber, "if there is one drop of blood on either my face or the razor, I'll have you beheaded."

The barber was too terrified to shave the king and he was asked to find a replacement. He returned home and told his apprentice that he was needed at the castle.

"You are going to shave the king," he explained, "but there is a condition."

A short while later, the apprentice presented himself at the king's castle.

"You understand the condition?" asked the king.

"My master's explained everything," replied the boy.

The king's face was soaped and shaved without a drop of blood being shed. The king looked at himself in the mirror.

"Well done," he said to the boy, "but weren't you the least bit nervous?"

"No, your majesty," said the apprentice. "I always consider all eventualities."

"What do you mean?" asked the king.

“If I’d nicked your face accidentally, I’d have given you a much bigger cut across your throat.”

The king was so pleased with the answer that he promoted the boy to court barber.