

Feast of Fools' Day



*Once a year the people of Paris get together for a day of fun.
This is called Feast of Fools' Day.*

- Preview:**
1. Read the name of the story.
 2. Look at the picture.
 3. Read the sentences under the picture.
 4. Read the first five paragraphs of the story.
 5. Then answer the following question.

You learned from your preview that Feast of Fools' Day would begin

- a. at ten o'clock.
- b. with a fight.
- c. with a play.
- d. when the church bells stopped ringing.

Turn to the Comprehension Check on page 10 for the right answer.

Now read the story.

Read to find out who becomes the new King of Fools.

Feast of Fools' Day

It was January 6, 1482. In the city of Paris, a church bell was ringing. Then another bell was heard. And then, another. All the church bells in Paris were ringing. But the loudest bells came from one church. It was a big, old church in the heart of the City.

It was Feast of Fools' Day. A great day of fun! It was a day when all of Paris had a great big party. It was the day to pick a new king. Not a *real* king. This was just for fun.

The people of Paris walked to the old church - the Church of Notre Dame. They were waiting for the party to begin. It was to start at twelve o'clock. It would begin with a play.

The people looked up at the church's big clock. The hands of the clock were not on the twelve. They would just have to wait a little longer. But they grew tired of waiting.

"The play! The play! The play!" they shouted. "Let's start the party *now*!" The people began pushing and fighting.

At last it was twelve o'clock and the play began. But the people were shouting so much, they didn't know it had started. They would not stop

shouting. They would not stop fighting. And so the play was called off.

"Pick the king!" shouted the men. "Yes, let's pick the king!" shouted the women. And so the people had their way.

To become the King of Fools, you stood before the people. Then you put your head through a hole in a board. Then you made an ugly face. The person who made the best ugly face became the Fool. That person would be Fool for the rest of the day! It was a very silly game. But the people of Paris thought it was fun.

The ugly faces made everyone laugh. But the people liked one ugly face best of all. The man who had made that face came out from behind the board. And when he did, the people looked surprised! They saw that he had not been making an ugly face at all. His face looked that way *all* the time!

"It's the man who rings the church bells!" a woman shouted, with surprise.

"His name is Quasimodo," said a young, fat man, with a laugh.

Quasimodo was short and fat. His red coat was covered with little silver bells. He

had a big hump on his back. Because of his hump, he was called a hunchback. His hair was red, and he had only one good eye. And when he smiled, a tooth was missing. Some thought Quasimodo was as bad as he was ugly.

Quasimodo looked around. He looked at the people's surprised faces. He saw many happy faces. Some were smiling. Others were laughing. He didn't understand this silly game. Why, he didn't even know it *was* a game. For Quasimodo was deaf.

"Look at him," shouted an old woman, "he doesn't know what's going on! Don't you people know that he can't hear you? The loud church bells have made him deaf!"

"Well, then," said one man, "he will be the best King of Fools *ever*!"

Quasimodo was given a nice robe to put on. A make-believe crown was put on his head. Then he was carried around the City. Quasimodo smiled at everyone, missing tooth and all. He didn't know what he was smiling about. But he was having fun.

Feast of Fools' Day

COMPREHENSION CHECK

Choose the best answer.

1. This story takes place in the
 - a. 1400's.
 - b. 1500's.
 - c. 1600's.
 - d. 1700's.
2. Feast of Fools' Day took place
 - a. every day.
 - b. once a month.
 - c. twice a year.
 - d. once a year.
3. On Feast of Fools' Day, someone new would become
 - a. the King of Fools.
 - b. a silly fool.
 - c. a Twelve O'Clock Fool.
 - d. a hunchback.
4. The play had been called off because
 - a. the play was silly.
 - b. everyone was fighting.
 - c. no one was watching it.
 - d. everyone was in the church.
5. To become the King of Fools, you had to
 - a. break a board with your hands.
 - b. ring the church bells.
 - c. get your face painted.
 - d. make the best ugly face.
6. Who became the King of Fools in the year 1482?
 - a. Quimbo
 - b. Quasimodo
 - c. Quasimotor
 - d. Quasimolar
7. Because he had a lump on his back, Quasimodo was called
 - a. a camel.
 - b. Lumpy.
 - c. a humpback.
 - d. a hunchback.
8. Quasimodo rang the bells at the Church of Notre Dame. After many years, this made him
 - a. ugly.
 - b. mad.
 - c. deaf.
 - d. sick.
9. Another name for this story could be
 - a. "The Hunchback."
 - b. "The Bells of Notre Dame."
 - c. "Church Bells are Ringing."
 - d. "Happy at Last."
10. This story is mainly about
 - a. a man who was loved by everyone.
 - b. an ugly man who everyone made fun of.
 - c. how Quasimodo became deaf.
 - d. the games people play.

Preview Answer:

c. with a play.

Check your answers with the key on page 67.

This page may be reproduced for classroom use.