A devoted queen cherished her loyal court jester, whose antics brought her endless laughter, and she rarely allowed him to wander far. When urgent matters summoned her to a distant kingdom, she commissioned a renowned inventor to craft a mechanical owl, designed to mimic human speech and relay events in her absence. She placed the owl in her chamber, instructing her ladies-in-waiting to guard it diligently. Upon her return, she inquired what the owl had witnessed, only to hear tales that cast doubt on her jester’s fidelity.

The jester, suspecting betrayal, assumed one of the servants had slandered him. Yet they revealed it was the owl, and he vowed retribution.

When the queen next departed, he ordered one maid to clang cymbals beneath the owl’s perch, another to shine lanterns into its eyes, and a third to spin a music box near its ear. They performed this chaos through the night with precision.

The following day, the queen asked the owl for a report. It replied, “Your Majesty, the cacophony of trumpets, blinding lights, and swirling shadows left me dazed—I cannot recount the turmoil I endured.”

The queen, certain no such commotion had occurred, deemed the owl a liar and smashed it to pieces. Yet she later wept, discovering the jester had indeed plotted mischief, and the owl’s words were a coded truth.