

### **“The King’s Choice” starring Jesper Christensen, Anders Baasmo Christiansen, Karl Markovics, 2016, NR, 133 minutes**

#### **Major themes:**

- Courage
- Moral courage
- Negotiation
- Honor
- Statecraft
- Discernment
- Just War
- War
- Father-son relationship
- Unity
- Self-sacrifice
- Playfulness

#### **Major characters:**

- H.M. Kong Haakon VII
- H.K.H. Kronprins Olav & H.K.H. Kronprinsesse Märtha (children: Ragnhild, Astrid, Harald)
- Curt Bräuer (German envoy)
- Utenriksminister Halvdan Koht (Norwegian Foreign Minister)
- Menig Fredrik Seeberg (Guardsman)
- Peder Anker Wedel Jarlsberg
- Oberstleutnant Hartwig Pohlman (Lieutenant Colonel)

## Movie Nights for Thinkers and Seekers

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### Background info:

- The events in this film occurred in April 1940.
- The Norwegian title of the film is "*Kongens nei*," which means "The King's No." It was a co-production between Norway and Ireland and was selected as the Norwegian entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 2017 Academy Awards.
- The King's car has the license plate A-1. In the film you can also see that the German envoy's car has the license plate A-88. 88 is a common abbreviation for "*Heil Hitler*" (H being the 8th letter of the alphabet)
- The "*Storting*" is the supreme legislature of Norway, established in 1814 by the Constitution of Norway. The unicameral parliament has 169 members, and is elected every four years based on party-list proportional representation.
- The Norwegian monarch is the monarchical head of state in Norway, which is a constitutional and hereditary monarchy with a parliamentary system.
- The present monarch is King Harald V (seen in this film as a child), who has reigned since January 17th, 1991, succeeding his father, Olav V.
- While in exile during World War II, King Haakon's daughter-in-law and grandchildren initially stayed in the White House with President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

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### Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 16:13 (The Message) – *“Keep your eyes open, hold tight to your convictions, give it all you’ve got, be resolute, and love without stopping.”*

1 Peter 2:13-17 (The Message) – *“Make the Master proud of you by being good citizens. Respect the authorities, whatever their level; they are God’s emissaries for keeping order. It is God’s will that by doing good, you might cure the ignorance of the fools who think you’re a danger to society. Exercise your freedom by serving God, not by breaking the rules. Treat everyone you meet with dignity. Love your spiritual family. Revere God. Respect the government.”*

Psalms 107:23-31 (NIV) – *“Some went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters. They saw the works of the Lord, his wonderful deeds in the deep. For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves. They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away. They reeled and staggered like drunkards; they were at their wits’ end. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven. Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind.”*

2 Samuel 22:29-34 (NET) – *“Indeed, you are my lamp, Lord. The Lord illumines the darkness around me. Indeed, with your help I can charge against an army; by my God’s power I can jump over a wall. The one true God acts in a faithful manner; the Lord’s promise is reliable; he is a shield to all who take shelter in him. Indeed, who is God besides the Lord? Who is a protector besides our God? The one true God is my mighty refuge; he removes the obstacles in my way. He gives me the agility of a deer; he enables me to negotiate the rugged terrain.”*

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### Discussion points:

1. Haakon demonstrated great courage in defying Nazi Germany even while struggling with debilitating physical pain. What can we learn from the way he, a Christian monarch, worked within the boundaries of his nation's constitution and democratic principles?
2. One character noted that Hitler had said that a nation that wouldn't fight for its survival didn't deserve to live. How did quoting the enemy's leader reveal both truth of the situation and inform the nation's strategy in moving forward?
3. Honor can be defined as, "*honesty, fairness, or integrity in one's beliefs and actions; a source of credit or distinction; high respect, as for worth, merit, or rank.*" Where is honor lacking in our world today? How can we sow seeds of honor? What would it look like for honor to be a part of how life is lived today?
4. Haakon's courage ensured Norway would actively defy the invasion longer than any of Germany's victims, and would continue to resist with a government in exile. What can we learn from this film about resisting evil in the face of extreme adversity?
5. One historian described the King and his family as "*the central cluster of decency in a world gone mad.*" In what way you do see the world going mad around you today? What is an act of decency that you can do in that specific context?