

The Life and Death of King John

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SCENE VI. An open place in the neighbourhood of Swinstead Abbey.

Enter the BASTARD and HUBERT, severally

HUBERT

Who's there? speak, ho! speak quickly, or I shoot.

BASTARD

A friend. What art thou?

HUBERT

Of the part of England.

BASTARD

Whither dost thou go?

HUBERT

What's that to thee? why may not I demand
Of thine affairs, as well as thou of mine?

BASTARD

Hubert, I think?

HUBERT

Thou hast a perfect thought:
I will upon all hazards well believe
Thou art my friend, that know'st my tongue so well.
Who art thou?

BASTARD

Who thou wilt: and if thou please,
Thou mayst befriend me so much as to think
I come one way of the Plantagenets.

HUBERT

Unkind remembrance! thou and eyeless night
Have done me shame: brave soldier, pardon me,
That any accent breaking from thy tongue

Should 'scape the true acquaintance of mine ear.

BASTARD

Come, come; sans compliment, what news abroad?

HUBERT

Why, here walk I in the black brow of night,
To find you out.

BASTARD

Brief, then; and what's the news?

HUBERT

O, my sweet sir, news fitting to the night,
Black, fearful, comfortless and horrible.

BASTARD

Show me the very wound of this ill news:
I am no woman, I'll not swoon at it.

HUBERT

The king, I fear, is poison'd by a monk:
I left him almost speechless; and broke out
To acquaint you with this evil, that you might
The better arm you to the sudden time,
Than if you had at leisure known of this.

BASTARD

How did he take it? who did taste to him?

HUBERT

A monk, I tell you; a resolved villain,
Whose bowels suddenly burst out: the king
Yet speaks and peradventure may recover.

BASTARD

Who didst thou leave to tend his majesty?

HUBERT

Why, know you not? the lords are all come back,
And brought Prince Henry in their company;
At whose request the king hath pardon'd them,
And they are all about his majesty.

BASTARD

Withhold thine indignation, mighty heaven,
And tempt us not to bear above our power!
I'll tell thee, Hubert, half my power this night,
Passing these flats, are taken by the tide;
These Lincoln Washes have devoured them;
Myself, well mounted, hardly have escaped.
Away before: conduct me to the king;
I doubt he will be dead ere I come.

Exeunt

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