

King John

3.3

Alarum; excursions; retreat. Enter King John, Queen Eleanor, Arthur Duke of Brittain, the Bastard, Hubert, lords, [with soldiers]

KING JOHN *(to Queen Eleanor)*

So shall it be; your grace shall stay behind
So strongly guarded. *(To Arthur)* Cousin, look not sad;
Thy grandam loves thee, and thy uncle will
As dear be to thee as thy father was.

ARTHUR

O, this will make my mother die with grief. 5

KING JOHN *(to the Bastard)*

Cousin, away for England! Haste before,
And ere our coming, see thou shake the bags
Of hoarding abbots. The fat ribs of peace
Must by the hungry now be fed upon.
Imprisoned angels set at liberty. 10
Use our commission in his utmost force.

BASTARD

Bell, book, and candle shall not drive me back
When gold and silver beck me to come on.
I leave your highness. ±±Grandam, I will pray,
If ever I remember to be holy, 15
For your fair safety. So I kiss your hand.

QUEEN ELEANOR

Farewell, gentle cousin.

KING JOHN Coz, farewell.

Exit the Bastard

QUEEN ELEANOR

Come hither, little kinsman. Hark, a word.
She takes Arthur aside

KING JOHN

Come hither, Hubert.
He takes Hubert aside

O my gentle Hubert,

We owe thee much. Within this wall of flesh 20
There is a soul counts thee her creditor,

And with advantage means to pay thy love;
And, my good friend, thy voluntary oath
Lives in this bosom, dearly cherisheÁd.
Give me thy hand.

He takes Hubert's hand

I had a thing to say,

25

But I will fit it with some better tune.
By heaven, Hubert, I am almost ashamed
To say what good respect I have of thee.

HUBERT

I am much bounden to your majesty.

KING JOHN

Good friend, thou hast no cause to say so yet, 30
But thou shalt have; and creep time ne'er so slow,
Yet it shall come for me to do thee good.
I had a thing to say±±but let it go.

The sun is in the heaven, and the proud day,
Attended with the pleasures of the world, 35
Is all too wanton and too full of gauds
To give me audience. If the midnight bell
Did with his iron tongue and brazen mouth
Sound on into the drowsy race of night;

If this same were a churchyard where we stand, 40
And thou possesseÁd with a thousand wrongs;
Or if that surly spirit, melancholy,

Had baked thy blood and made it heavy, thick,
Which else runs tickling up and down the veins,
Making that idiot, laughter, keep men's eyes 45
And strain their cheeks to idle merriment±±

A passion hateful to my purposes±±

Or if that thou couldst see me without eyes,
Hear me without thine ears, and make reply
Without a tongue, using conceit alone, 50

Without eyes, ears, and harmful sound of words;
Then in despite of broad-eyed watchful day
I would into thy bosom pour my thoughts.

But, ah, I will not. Yet I love thee well,
And by my troth, I think thou lov'st me well. 55

HUBERT

So well that what you bid me undertake,
Though that my death were adjunct to my act,
By heaven, I would do it.

KING JOHN Do not I know thou wouldst?
Good Hubert, Hubert, Hubert, throw thine eye
On yon young boy. I'll tell thee what, my friend, 60
He is a very serpent in my way,
And wheresoe'er this foot of mine doth tread,
He lies before me. Dost thou understand me?
Thou art his keeper.

HUBERT And I'll keep him so
That he shall not offend your majesty. 65

KING JOHN
Death.

HUBERT My lord.

KING JOHN A grave.

HUBERT He shall not live.

KING JOHN
Enough.

I could be merry now. Hubert, I love thee.
Well, I'll not say what I intend for thee.
Remember. (*To Queen Eleanor*) Madam, fare you well.
I'll send those powers o'er to your majesty. 70

QUEEN ELEANOR
My blessing go with thee.

KING JOHN (*to Arthur*) For England, cousin, go.
Hubert shall be your man, attend on you
With all true duty.±±On toward Calais, ho!

*Exeunt [Queen Eleanor, attended, at one door,
the rest at another door]*