



King George VI wanted to reward his brave people who had gone through such hardship (suffered so much!) during World War II.

In partnership with Lord Cavendish, the King set up a project whereby the Royal jewels would be recovered from The Wash. Thereby, Cavendish's daughter Nerine and the strapping Aussie engineer Norman were swept into the close confines of King John's minders.

This is a hauntingly beautiful story.

It provides the second in the "Cavendish" series.

[Suddenly rather horrified and self-conscious]

Good Lord! I say! You don't think that people will take offence at our little shooting party, do you? Not an appropriate time? Heavens, I'd hate to upset anyone.

Lord Cavendish Don't think of it, Sir! After all, we have to get back to normality as
hurrying to calm HRM soon as ever that's possible.

King George Normality ... yes ... Exactly so.

His Majesty indicates to the last hangers-on that he wants them to go forward, leaving himself and Cavendish behind. The King and his friend sit on a fallen log, broken guns over their knees. Geoffrey moves away and stands at a discreet distance, still with broken gun over his arm.

King George Cavendish, I thought I'd take this rare opportunity to have a
private word with you about our little project.

Lord Cavendish Yes, Sir. Most opportune.

Both men light cigarettes from King George's match.

King George So, how goes it? Anything yet?

Lord Cavendish *draws* Nothing much. A few minor items. Nothing of note.
in the smoke

King George Do you hold out any hope of finding it?

Lord Cavendish is in a difficult position. He tries to sound positive.

Lord Cavendish Well, Sir, all I can say at this juncture is that we're doing our
best.

King George But not much yet, eh? Very well. I'll drop in on you during the
week to lend moral support.

[Long silence]

Do you know, I often go into the projector room (we've converted one of the rooms in the palace into a sort of miniature theatre), and I watch the newsreel of the Allied

landings at Normandy. Watch it over and over again. To my eternal regret, they wouldn't hear of my being there. I should have been there, though, and that's a fact.

Lord Cavendish Britain's finest hour, Sir.

[Comforting]

You were there in spirit.

King George I'm so proud of our young men, Roy. And the young nurses and what have you ...

Unspeakably proud. And of all the British people, who so courageously stood up against Gerry, when he bombed us in the dark days. London ablaze. Children shipped off to Canada and Australia.

[Sighing]

What a business! But they came through their ordeal.

Lord Cavendish The indomitable British lion, Sir.
nodding, smiling sadly

King George And I'm proud of how magnificent they've been during these hard times. With their ration cards and their queuing for meat. I want to give them something, Roy. Something of real value, to belong to the British people forever. Be assured, Roy, that I want all the levers pulled down hard in this venture.

Lord Cavendish Of course, Your Majesty. We're doing our very best, you can count on that.

King George nods, then a silence falls again. They both continue to smoke peacefully, as the others troop back to the Abbey from the shooting party. These folk stroll along leafy, verdant lanes.

King George My position is so apposite to his, you know. I'm speaking of John, in this instance. He could never escape from his

brother's shadow. Richard had conquered all their hearts and minds ... so had David.

Lord Cavendish
surprised

Your Majesty, nobody in their right mind would liken you to John. He was despised as perhaps the worst king we've ever had, whereas you are beloved by your people. As for the former king, your brother ... why, he would not have made a popular ruler in the long run, for all his attractiveness as a man. If you don't mind my saying so, Sir, your brother was very much a light-weight.

King George *nods*

We'll see ... Perhaps you are right.

[Rises]

We'd better motor back or they'll send a search party.

Cavendish and His Majesty wander off towards an estate wagon, broken guns slung over their arms, and dogs in toe.

END OF SCENE

Prelude, Scene ii: 1948, The Site At The Wash

Night. It is all machinery, lumber and mess. There is a rude shed, in which the men inspect the finds. There are light bulbs dangling about, and a radio plays '40s music (with sound in and out in waves, and lots of static). Shed full of mess. A couple of men with magnifying glasses doodle about with some stuff (they are Jack Bennett and Maurie Dalkeith). More stuff is laid out on a dirty trestle table, over which slowly swings a bright light bulb. The shed is a total chaos of mess, lumber, bits of machinery. It almost takes a machete to hack one's way through.

The Honourable Nerine Bevan, daughter of Lord Cavendish, arrives. She is extremely beautiful, with curvy shoulder-length light brown hair. About 19 years of age, she wears an old army coat. Her manner is unconventional and pert, as would be the case in the late '40s for an earnest female

© October 2011 Property of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE

university student. She is studying Philosophy and History at Oxford. She addresses no-one in particular.

Nerine Where's my father?

Jack and Maurie quickly rise to their feet, startled at this intrusion.

Jack Why, Miss Bevan! It's lovely to see you again.

I'm afraid you've just missed His Lordship. He left for Oxford about a quarter of an hour ago.

Nerine Really? Oh blast! I've motored all the way over from King's Lynn, hoping to catch him.

Nerine turns away, looking about her inquisitively. The two men glance at each other and then resume their work. From the depths of the shed, Nerine finds a bench on which lay a few minor archaeological items: a dagger, some cutlery, a couple of unimportant pieces of jewellery. The camera returns to the men, working away casually.

Nerine disembodied voice What's all this stuff? These tawdry pieces of ... of nothing much ...

Jack calls out Just some bric-a-brac which ...er ... which washed up on the beach, Miss Bevan.

Nerine has returned to where the men work and looks accusingly at them.

Nerine severe and put- Don't bother trying to cover up, Dr Bennett. I know that
out Daddy and dear King Bertie are scheming to rescue King John's jewels from The Wash. I wasn't born yesterday, you know. Well, it stands to reason, what?

[Complete change of tack.]

I say! You've a strongbox here stuffed with petty cash, haven't you? You couldn't lend me a tenner, could you?

Jack, looking defeated, gives Maurie a speaking look.

Maurie affable Oh, of course, Miss Bevan. If you don't mind signing for it.

Nerine *airily* Not at all.

While Maurie and Nerine speedily make the transaction, with delicious music to accompany them, we quickly scan this junk-heap, focusing on the bench where the artefacts lie spread out on a cleared space.

Back to Maurie. Both men mutter goodbye to Nerine, and it sounds as if she has gone. There is a shared glance, with a laugh and a headshake.

Maurie *low* I'm sure that the boss finds that one a bit of a handful.

Jack Care for a cup of tea? We've been at this for hours.

Maurie I'll say! Yes, righto to a cuppa.

Jack moves into the small galley area, where he sets a ghastly old kettle onto a tiny gas ring. He looks out a window, then looks a second time. Music becomes more intense.

Jack *peering into the darkness* Didn't that girl say that she was leaving? I hope nothing is amiss: her car's still outside.

It better not be engine trouble, not at this time of night.

Maurie *careful, with worried frown* We'd better check. Lord Cavendish's daughter, you know.

The two men move into the back area, by the bench, where they find Nerine standing in an absolute trance, staring up into the roof gables. Both men wear concerned, anxious expressions as they stare at the girl.

Jack *unsure what to do* Miss Bevan! Are you feeling quite well, Miss?

Nerine *snapping out of it* What ... oh ... oh dear! Something rather brilliant has just ...
[Becoming urgent]

... do you have a pen and some paper? Quick, quick, for I must write it all down.

Both men are surprised and stunned, but dither into action, fetching a writing tablet and a couple of pencils for Nerine. She sits down and begins to write frantically. One of her fingers has a spot of blood which wells up as she writes. Camera closes in on this.

Nerine *not looking up from her feverish work* Have either of you seen him? Or heard him speak?

Jack *looking quickly at Maurie for reassurance* Who would that be, Miss Bevan?

Nerine *quickly looks up* Why, the ghost of John Lackland. King John. It just spoke to me.

[Emphatic]

Honest Injun!

Jack stares at the girl with mouth open. Then he pulls himself together.

Jack *carefully* Perhaps you'll allow me to fetch you a cup of tea, Miss? You're looking a little peaky, if I may say so.

Nerine is brisk and business-like, still eagerly and frenetically scribbling.

Nerine *absently singing* *Tea for two and two for tea*

Just me for you and --

[Excited]

This is wizard! I can't tell you what --

No, I shan't require any refreshment. But thanks anyway.

I'll dash off to the Abbey, now. I must find my father immediately! Oh, and if you **do** see or hear the ghost, for God's sake, let me know.

Nerine dashes off abruptly. Keep the music going, building up.

Jack Bennett cannot believe the girl's insouciance. He watches her leave, with hands on his hips.

Jack *appalled* Well, I never!

END OF SCENE

Prelude, Scene iii: 1948, Pentecost Abbey, Oxford, Ancestral Home Of The Lords Cavendish.

A grey and leaden corner of a garden. Nerine Bevan is discovered sitting in the garden, looking quite sullen and pouty. She reads and re-reads the pages of foolscap in her hand. These are the ones she wrote up in the previous scene. Her whole body language is that of someone who is not getting their own way. Her well-dressed mother (Bessie, whom we met in the Hastings film) finds her. There is no music.

Bessie	Found you! Now, what ails you, precious? Are you --
Nerine <i>angry and hurt & quite put out</i>	Daddy's being thoroughly beastly! He won't listen to a word that I say!
Bessie <i>sits near her daughter</i>	One imagines that he wasn't best pleased that you've been poking about where you weren't supposed to be.
Nerine <i>defensive</i>	One would have to have been a blind and deaf lunatic not to have guessed. The King? The Wash? Come on, Mother, I didn't arrive with the last shower of rain.
Bessie <i>amused</i>	Let's try to understand that His Majesty may have wanted to keep his project something of a secret, Nerine. Perhaps Daddy was annoyed at your touching those relics. You had no right to, and you know it.
Nerine <i>aggrieved</i>	Mouldy old junk! Anyway, there's definitely something going on. I absolutely heard voices, just above me. But when I told the Pater, he flew into a tantrum. And just look at the scar on my hand ... look at it! You can't tell me, mother, that that's an ordinary, everyday scar. Look! It's formed itself into a heraldic insignia, or something. But does Father want to investigate it? No!
Bessie <i>soothing</i>	Yes, dear. Never mind. You musn't worry Daddy about these little problems, just now, my pet. He has so many worries on

his mind.

Nerine *appalled*

Little problems? Mother! Dear old Bessie ... I'm telling you that King John ***spoke*** to me. At least, he was speaking to someone. He's haunting that dig and my father ***must*** be told. He has to listen to me, he just ***has*** to.

Bessie *placating*

Angel, why not tell ***me*** what happened? Then I can have a quiet chat to Daddy, when he's in a good mood, and bring him around. Hmm? What do you think about that idea?

Nerine *reluctant, but seeing her only solution*

Oh, alright then.

Nerine purposefully smooths out the pages of manuscript.

Bessie

What ... what are the pages for, dear?

Nerine

Well, I was so sure that I'd forget what happened that I scribbled it all down instantly.

Bessie

That was a clever thought.

Nerine

Yes. I'd give them to you to read, only they're pretty much illegible scrawl. So I'll have to read out aloud, if that's alright.

Bessie *humouring her daughter*

Oh, yes, yes. Much better. You read them aloud.

Nerine *clears throat, being happier now*

Well, I was fiddling with an old brooch-thing and accidentally pricked my finger with the pin.

Straight away, I heard voices above me. Directly above me.

[Reading from her notes]

A girl's voice said: "Do you still have much land in France, Sire? Do you ever visit your French possessions?"

Then a man said: "Hardly ever. You see, my little rose, nasty

old Philip would treat me as a vassal were I in France. But here, I have no overlord except for the Pope, and he doesn't ever visit England, thank God. I'm king of all that I survey."

Then he said: "Dicky was always flitting abroad on his merry crusades. Cost this country a pretty penny, he did, but no-one seems to mind. God spoke to him and told him to go. Whereas I ... God is forever telling me that I'm to unite England, to make this country great."

[No longer reading aloud.]

What do you think of that? It has **got** to be King John. There can be no other explanation.

Now, music kicks in, suggesting "something-weird-is-evolving". Bessie stares out into the garden, puzzled.

Bessie almost to herself The voice of a king ... I wish Geoffrey was here. He'd be able to ...

Nerine in stunned surprise My brother Geoffrey? What does he have to do with this?

Bessie snaps out of her musings.

Bessie King John? Yes, it can only have been John, speaking of Richard the Lionheart, calling him "Dicky" ... is that what you think?

Nerine Yes, absolutely. Who else could it be? But the point is, Mater, the ghost of King John is hovering over The Wash, and Father is so pig-headed that he won't hear what I have to say about it.

Bessie Don't speak of Daddy like that. It's that he's so busy rather than ...

Nerine hopeful You'll tell him then? About this weird scar, and about the voices I heard?

Once again, Bessie is distracted and stares blindly at her garden.

Bessie *distant* Yes, yes of course ...

Nerine What are you thinking?

Bessie *sighs and shakes head* You know, I always thought that the story of the baggage being lost in The Wash was just so much balderdash. That His Majesty is seeking hen's teeth with this venture of his. Roping in Daddy to look for the missing jewels, when everyone knows that they ended up somewhere else.

Nerine There never was an incident at The Wash?

Bessie Oh yes. The wagons took the short route and were beaten by the tide. Yes, that bit's true. But only the wagons and some odd cargo were lost ... and the locals cleared that away very promptly. An empty casket into which one would have placed one's treasures, but no jewels at all.

His Majesty is convinced, however, that there's a stash of John's jewels buried somewhere in the sand and sludge of The Wash. He quite firmly believes it.

Nerine But why?

Bessie After Buckingham Palace was bombed during those horrid, dark days of the War, members of the Palace staff found themselves clearing out some old trunks. Therein, several medieval drawings and paintings were uncovered, not known previously.

Apparently (so these drawings indicate), at some misty time in the past, a set of the most beautiful, elegant jewels existed, belonging to the royals. They predate Chaucer. They may have been booty brought back to England by the Crusaders. By Richard Lionheart and his cronies, perhaps. In that case, they would have come into the ken of John Lackland on Richard's death.

The King showed Daddy the artwork, by way of convincing him that King John had at one stage possessed these rare treasures,

there's every hope that Continental cash will be seeping in.

In addition, Sir, we require a really good man who is an expert in this field. I've heard of some Australian chap. He was last heard of in Arabia. Can't locate his whereabouts, at present, but I'm jolly keen to gain his services when we do find him.

All that aside, Sir, the search for the jewels may take a couple of years, at best. The tides, you know, and indeed the entire coastline have changed dramatically over the past 800 years. Whatever we do, even if we weren't find much treasure at all, will be of huge benefit to shipping interests.

All in all, Your Majesty, I humbly request that you approve of my plan to multiply our efforts.

King George *hopeful* But you do think that all this effort may unearth something of value?

Lord Cavendish nods, confident. He looks the King squarely in the eyes.

Lord Cavendish I do, Sir.

King George I very much like your confidence, Roy.

Alright, then. Go ahead.

END OF SCENE

Prelude, Scene v: 1948, Lord Cavendish's Study At Pentecost Abbey

Lord Cavendish "lives" in a hide-bound, masculine library-cum-study. He is very busy with piles of papers, books and clutter scattered about. A knock at the door is heard.

Lord Cavendish *not losing track of his work* Come!

Nerine *opening the door; eager* Are you ready to hear my King John story yet?

Lord Cavendish No. And nor will I ever be. Sit down, will you? I'll not be a minute.
Nerine slumps petulantly and heavily into a nearby leather sitting chair.

Nerine You ought to know, Pater, that there's a ghost haunting your work shed at The Wash. Definitely frontpage news.

Lord Cavendish Not interested.

[Shakes finger at her.]

And you keep right away from there. If you upset my men with your ghost nonsense

Nerine *sitting up, fired with enthusiasm* Daddy! I heard King John right above me, talking to --

Lord Cavendish *sour then becoming more fatherly* Not interested, I'm afraid. Don't care! I've better things to do with my time.

[Interrupting his daughter before she can argue any further.]

Now, as it happens, your Uncle Denham has pulled a few strings (which is one of his many strengths) in order to snare you a place at the Sorbonne. So your dream of studying with the Masters is now realized. What do you think of that?

Nerine *thrilled, and sits* Truly? Study in Paris? I can't seem to grasp it --

forward, eyes gleaming

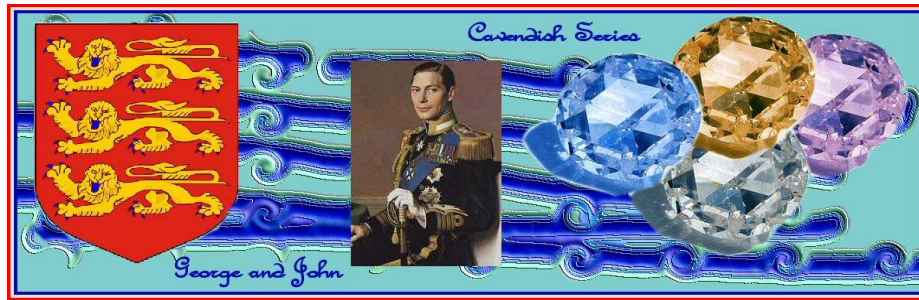
Lord Cavendish Go and find your mother so that we can make some plans. And
mind! No more hideous ghost stories, or you shan't go!

END OF SCENE

END OF PROLOGUE

© October 2011 Property of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE

THIS DOCUMENT IS SOLELY OWNED BY QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE and is intended solely for use as an entertainment. QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE retains exclusive and inalienable rights to this document, which may not be reproduced in any way without the express authorisation and permission of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE. Any disclosure, reproduction, copying, distribution, or other dissemination or use of this document or of the intellectual property contained in this document is strictly prohibited without the express authorisation and permission of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE. (www.qld-tm.net.au)



ACT I

Four years have passed.

I, Scene i: 1952, The Work Shed At The Wash

Prior to entering the work shed, on this late afternoon, we sweep across the scene to note the onlookers, at their vantage point on the beach. The works now spread broadly to the left and right of the work shed. Lots of trucks, cars, more and more pipes and hardware stretched over the beach, in contrast to beach scenes in The Prologue.

Lord Cavendish, Nerine and the family dog Wolf (on a leash) are walking through the shed. Nerine is looking around at everything. The dog pulls and whines. Miss Bevan has matured. The young lady is now stylish as well as being extremely beautiful. She now has "Parisian polish."

Nerine Goodness! His Majesty's project has grown enormously, Father.

Cavendish You've not visited the site for nearly four years, Nerine. Naturally, we've expanded somewhat.

Nerine *ironic laugh* ***Somewhat!*** Well, I can see by the mess that your housekeeper remains missing-in-action.

Cavendish And ***no ghosts*** were ever seen nor heard, thank you very much.

Nerine *puzzled* Ghosts? What ... ?

© October 2011 Property of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE

THIS DOCUMENT IS SOLELY OWNED BY QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE and is intended solely for use as an entertainment. QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE retains exclusive and inalienable rights to this document, which may not be reproduced in any way without the express authorisation and permission of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE. Any disclosure, reproduction, copying, distribution, or other dissemination or use of this document or of the intellectual property contained in this document is strictly prohibited without the express authorisation and permission of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE. (www.qld-tm.net.au)

[Now the penny drops and she blushes]

Oh, yes! Those silly voices that I heard. And then you packed me off to France. I can only commend you for that, dear Father. I really was the most unconscionable fool back then. Thank the Lord I've outgrown that phase ...

Nerine is looking about in awe. She stops at the bench which is now full to overflowing with all manner of beach-finds. Nerine reaches towards the items, then thoughtfully pulls her hand back.

Nerine Are they still with you? Um ... Jack and er ...

Cavendish Jack Bennett and Maurie Dalkeith? Yes, still here. In fact, they're the backbone of a group of archaeologists and curators. Quite a little army we have now.

Nerine Tsk!

Nerine shakes her head in awe. She is still holding Wolf's lead.

Nerine It's just amazing, Daddy ...

And these are indeed King John's jewels?

Cavendish Not at all. However, many of these artefacts do in truth belong to that period in history. Mmm ... we're on the right track, I think.

Nerine Didn't you tell me that His Majesty is dropping by today?

Cavendish To see **you**, in fact --

Nerine *Magnifique!*

Cavendish And to review the progress of the digging. He rarely if ever has the chance to see how we're getting on. So this is a special visit to kill two birds with one stone, as it were.

Nerine Of course. If I get half a chance, I'll show him an old book I dug up in Rheims. Mother once divulged something about Crusader jewels, King John and so on ... this book I found was so apposite that I couldn't resist. I'm sure the King will be equally fascinated.

They catch sight of Norm's back through the window, and then hear him calling out to some disembodied voice. It's utterly important that Nerine not see Norm's face. Lord Cavendish nods his head in Norm's direction.

Cavendish Ah! That's the Australian I was telling you about. Quite a character, but an excellent engineer. He's worked in Arabia, Alaska ... I'll introduce you to him.

Nerine But first, you have to make that call to America. And while you do that, Wolf's up for a long walk along the beach. We'll keep right away from the workers, don't worry.

Cavendish Me worry? I hardly think so. Alright. Well, don't go too far away, in case the King should arrive.

Nerine Count on it. Come on, Wolf boy. Time for your walk.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene ii: 1952, Out On The Beach At The Wash

Nerine takes the dog out, going away from the works. Outside, the royal Rolls Royce arrives. The minder, an army officer, steps out and opens the door for the King. His Majesty wears a shirt and tie, jumper and old tweed jacket, hat, trousers and brogues. We see a bit of random discussion and pointing, then the King hands to him his hat and an old satchel. The king looks dreadfully ill, as compared to the scenes of the Prologue.

Minder *concerned, calls* Not too cold for you, sir?
out

King George No ... I'll be right. I want to have a look-see. You can stay inside, out of the wind.

In response to some comment from the minder, the King waves him off.

© October 2011 Property of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE

King George No, no ... go on in. Get yourself a hot cup of tea. I'll be fine, honestly.

The King saunters out towards the beach, alongside a huge pipe. The King seems to be savouring the ozone. The gangway on which he stands is short but complicated by wires, pipes and bits and pieces. Then the King steps onto the sand. He seems to relish the biting air, even though his shoulders shiver. From behind King George, out of nowhere, Norm approaches, touching the King on the shoulder as he tries to pass him.

Norm 'Scuse me, mate.

Watched by King George, Norm squats to grab some machinery and turn it over, checking the switches. The young man makes a sound of absolute disgust. Norm then stands, to yell at someone further down the beach.

Norm *hands cupped at mouth, yelling into the wind* Aw, the bloody thing wasn't turned on. Try it now!

Norm waves vigorously. Then, the purr of machinery in the distance is heard. Norm gives the thumbs-up to someone in the distance. Then Norm turns to the King and shakes his head ruefully. Norm has not recognized His Majesty.

Norm *to King George* Fucking drongos.

King George Mmm, precisely!

Norm Ah ... it's a bit nippy today. What do ya think?

They begin to stroll to the beach.

King George I'm an old sailor, you know: I love this fresh, salt air and the smell of the sea.

Norm Oh, really? A sea-dog, eh?

[King nods]

Yeah, but it's a bit pongy here.

King George *reaching into his jacket pocket* May I offer you a cigarette? I'm sorry, I don't know your name.

Norm Norm Yardley, from Sydney, Australia.

The King and the commoner shake hands.

Norm Yeah, thanks, I could cop a fag, if you can spare one.

His Majesty offers Norm a smoke from his gold cigarette case. Norm takes a cigarette, looking at it appreciatively.

Norm *grins* Ah, tailor-mades. Pretty flash, that case: a bit swish. Ya must 'ave won some money at the races to afford a gold case like that, eh?

King George lights the cigarette for him then lights his own.

Norm *inhales in complete enjoyment* Ta. That just hits the spot. I just roll me own, me. They're never as good as the tailor-mades, though.

King George I've smoked these for longer than I care to remember. They're rather good.

Norm Yes. Smooth ... Sorry, I didn't catch your moniker?

King George My moniker? Oh ... er ... Bert Windsor is my name. How ... how are you getting on here? How's it going?

Norm *squinting in thought* Do ya really wanna know? 'Cause I can give you a blow-by-blow rundown, if that's what you're after.

King George *affably* Of course.

Norm squats and draws in the sand with his finger; he speaks with huge enthusiasm.

Norm As I saw it, the problem was this slag here. So, I designed a series of drainage canals and installed bigger pipes. Then, the key to solving this problem was to actually pump the sludge out of **there** to over **here**, into holding bays. That left an area the size of Belgium which I shored up. I did that by putting in rock ballast and reo. It was quite a job, but that let us extend the works for

miles, as you can see.

[Stands]

I'd better go and see what those blokes are up to. They've probably got it arse-about.

Norm pats the King on shoulder and shakes his hand.

Norm Nice to meet ya, Bert. Thanks for the death-stick. Look after yourself, mate.

As he starts off, Norm yells to some distant person.

Norm *shouting* Wind that hose out about three more yards or it's not going to reach the fucking hawser, you bludgers!

Norm sprints off, while the King grins and rolls his eyes. Cavendish appears.

Cavendish So sorry, Sir. I was making a rather urgent call to America.

[Notes the King's look]

I hope that chap wasn't uncivil, Sir. I'll give him a good, swift kick up the arse if he was.

King George No, no! He seems very keen on his work.

Do you know that I can't recall ever having been called "mate" before? Not even in my Navy days.

Cavendish *snorts*
angrily Colonial churlishness.

King George Well ... let's just call him rough around the edges. But I like him ... that chap's going to help me, I feel.

King George and Lord Cavendish saunter out of shot, back into the work shed.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene iii: 1952, Later Outside The Work Shed.

We switch quickly to Cavendish standing outside the work shed as Norm strides purposefully up to him.

Cavendish *firm but not angry* Hi, Yardley! Come here!

Norm *smiling* Lord Cavendish! Would you care to inspect the –

Cavendish *perplexed* Now see here! Don't you ever look at your bloody pennies? Don't you recognise your **King** when you see him? Calling him "Bert"! Goodness me!

Norm *confused* What d'ya mean, Sir?

Cavendish That gentleman who so kindly gave up one of his expensive cigarettes to you, and who got an earful of vulgarity for his trouble, was this project's royal sponsor: His Majesty King George VI.

Norm *surprised, scratches head* Crikey! Was that the King? Well, I'll be blowed!

END OF SCENE

I, Scene iv: 1952, King George And Nerine At The Wash

Seated side by side, in the work shed, are Nerine and His Majesty. He has extracted from his satchel some superb sketches of the jewels. She in her turn has opened the very old volume to display some sumptuous sketches of crusaders. The purpose of this part of the scene is so that we can get an idea of the worth of King John's jewels, and to prelude the later scene when John "dreams" in "cartoon" of the crusade he will lead to the Holy Land. In both cases, we see glimpses of beautiful artwork. Note

© October 2011 Property of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE

the dragon and the knight at prayer. Snatches of conversation are heard, but nothing worthy of scripting. Just commentary on what they are looking at. Get this scene over as quickly as possible.

King George *fingering one of the drawings* King Richard ... how hard it was for his younger brother to fill his shoes.

I had more or less the same problem with the Abdication crisis. My brother had been larger than life, and then I was shoved into the top job, all unprepared, as it were.

Funnily enough, John was a jewel connoisseur and so is the Duchess of Windsor. The money David's forked out on her!

[Shakes his head.]

Nerine Father is absolutely convinced that he'll dredge up King John's jewels, Sir.

King George He will do that. If the jewels are there in The Wash as legend describes, then your father is the man to find them.

[Grins]

Or that Australian chap who's running the show.

Nerine I've not been introduced to him yet.

King George He's rather different. I think you'll find him vastly entertaining.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene v: 1952, Advancing Darkness In The Shed

Now it is late afternoon, getting dark. The King has gone. Nerine and the dog are unseen, in the back of the work shed where the bench is (that is, where the relics are) in the little office. Cavendish is on the phone, trying to organise something. Norm walks in with a bottle of beer, and leans against the bench, smoking and relaxed.

© October 2011 Property of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE

Cavendish *shouting into the phone* I'm sorry but that is just not good enough. It had better be delivered to my desk on Wednesday morning at the very latest or I'll be talking to your Manager.

Very well. I'm ringing off now.

Cavendish hangs up, muttering about incompetent nincompoops. He spots Norm.

Norm Beer, Sir?

Cavendish is busy as always with scads of papers and notebooks.

Cavendish Thanks, but I think I'll wait until I get back to Oxford. Whiskey and soda beckons.

Norm Look, I'm terribly sorry about this afternoon, Sir.

Cavendish *looks up* What's that?

Norm Not knowing the King. The trouble is ... well, I'm afraid that he looks very much older than he does on the coins and stamps. His Majesty doesn't really look all that well.

Cavendish No. You're damn right about that. In fact, I'm quite concerned with His Majesty's health. Of course, it's a hellish job, running that sort of a show. Empire and so on. And he's always smoked too much, more's the pity.

By the way, (luckily for you!) he liked the cut of your jib, in spite of your insouciance. I trust that his faith in you will not be misplaced.

The dog Wolf starts whining and scratching. Both men hear the noise and stiffen, alert.

Cavendish Nerine? Are you ready to go? ... What's she doing in there?

Music kicks in: something is going to happen. Now Norm goes into the body of the work shed. The dog is disturbed, whining and scratching frenetically at the floorboards.

The girl has fainted to the floor. Norm takes charge, checking her neck and limbs. He tries to wake her. Cavendish enters, concerned, not sure how to act.

Norm *in command* She's alive but in a coma, I think.

[Gently pats her hand, then lightly taps her cheek.]

Miss Cavendish! Can you hear me? ... No, she's out. Is it her habit, to faint like this?

Cavendish *all at sea* No. I've never heard of --

Norm rises to his feet with the girl in his arms.

Norm I'd like to get her straight to the hospital. I'll take your car, if that's alright. It'll be quicker. I know the way.

As he speaks, Norm carries Nerine out to the car and takes over. The chauffeur is left with the dog.

Random snips of conversation are heard, as the music takes off (now racy and dramatic).

Norm sits in the driver's seat, with Lord Cavendish beside him, and the girl lying on the back seat. As they take off, the music rises to driving, racing, urgent. Into the looming darkness.

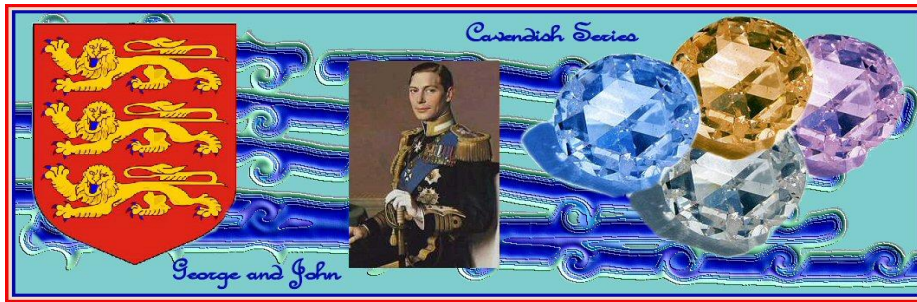
Lord Cavendish looks back from the front seat to his daughter's inanimate form.

They drive into the late evening, rain falls. This scene will morph into the next scene (Act II, scene i) set in 1203.

END OF SCENE, END OF ACT I

The actress who plays Nerine also plays Maggs.

The actor who plays Norm also plays Clarin.



ACT II

II, Scene i: 1203, A Roman Villa (In England) On A Wet Afternoon

We have come out of the colourless '40s and '50s scenes and into this depth of colour.

The previous scene was late, late afternoon into evening with a car racing to hospital. Shadowy, grey and sepia tones. Very gloomy and sombre.

Now we seem to be driving up to this rainy old Roman villa in 1203; and into the villa via an open window (no glass of course), along a corridor, and into a room where warmth, colour and laughter are uppermost.

King John, resplendent in some middle eastern garb, lies on a couch, his face covered by a silk scarf.

His five attendants are also in the room.

Walter stands near a roaring fire, laughing immoderately at something which a smiling Simon has whispered to him.

Guy and Roland are playing at some sort of board game (backgammon perhaps?) and they look around at the sudden eruption of the immoderate laughter.

Martin stands to one side, staring out the window, deep in thought.

All of the attendants are sumptuously dressed, as befits their rank, except for Roland who is wearing a ghastly peasant outfit. There is a huge oak table groaning under the weight of colourful, shiny food.

Along with the huge, dancing fire, there are enough flambeaux (absolutely no candles!) to fill the room with light.

Key point: the five companions and John like to enjoy "word-games", especially if they degrade into smuttiness. The aim is to outdo the previous word-picture, and they get more and more outrageous as they go.

- Martin *reprovingly* Hush, Sir Walter. His Majesty is trying to sleep.
- John *from under the scarf* No I'm not. Actually, I've been contemplating what we can do if this infernal rain doesn't stop. I'm making some plans for the morrow.
- Guy A wet afternoon ought to be spent in bed with a wet maiden. That's what I fink.
[This is met with laughter]
- Simon Yes ... a lovely girl who's wet with wine, which has to be licked off.
[More laughter]
- Martin *joining-in, but seeming to be solemn* The wine of the finest, a band of musicians to entertain, a crusty old Saxon to rhyme his tales of ancient valour ... and that damp maiden with her long yellow hair tumbling over your softest silken sheets.
- This is met with an appreciative "Ah!" John stirs. He sits up, taking the scarf off, waiting for more. The other men watch him stirring.*
- John Go on. Who's next?
- Roland *to Martin* Do you **really** like them Saxon poems, Marty? I can't follow 'em 'alf the time.
- John *pleasant* Rollo, it's your turn, old boy.
- Roland *breathes in* Right, sire! I'm going to take vat maiden, douse 'er lovely body in French Bordeaux wine **and** get in some of vem

beautiful Saxon girls to sing. They can rub 'oney onto the naked maiden whiles I watch.

[Laughs]

Now vat ought to separate ve men from ve boys!

There is general laughter and appreciation.

Walter, knowing that all the eyes are now on himself and loving to be the centre of attention, looks about him: smooth, suave and wicked.

Walter *drawls*

Wine **and** honey, Sir Roland? Tsk! Too much for just one man, I'm afraid.

No. My cock will be roaring from my loins with such a massive, throbbing pain that the wine-soaked lovely and I will roll through the hay at a maddening pace. And when we stop, I'll push home my very masculine advantage until she screams for mercy.

John claps delightedly. All five men applaud Walter's effort.

John *delighted*

Grand! Wonderful! I want to see it! I want to see it!

Guy

Is vis maiden still a Saxon girl, or is she now turned into a Norman *demoiselle*?

John

Does it matter?

Guy

No, I s'pose not. Just wonderin'.

John has risen from the couch and is picking over the food in a negligent fashion, trying this and picking at that.

Walter *ingratiating himself*

Johnny, what have you in mind for tomorrow? You said something about --

John *recalling the future treat*

Oh, yes. Thank you, my dearest Walt for reminding me.

We're going to test my river theory.

John eats, casting an appreciative eye over the feast.

John *sweetly* Now, can anyone remember the sage proposition which I recently postulated? On the subject of "rivers"?

The five attendants become alert, quickly looking for some spark of recall from each other. They are all too aware that John's tone might be a precursor to a temper tantrum.

As the five men stir restlessly, John turns from the table and gazes on his attendants speculatively. John then looks down, with eyes closed. He speaks to Martin in a sing-song voice. The five attendants become alert, concerned at this voice.

John *Mar-tin?*

Martin is scared to be singled out without time to prepare. He looks about wildly, then as he remembers, he becomes confident and triumphant. John, bored as he usually is with Martin, turns back to the food.

Martin *flounders at first* Oh, oh, yes, Your Majesty. You very wisely divined that ... Should there be a swollen river, and some poor soul being stuck on a drowning eyot ... Er ...

[Deep breath, remembrance, then rushes into speech.]

If, Sire, a simple man were to be placed on a small island in a rain-raging river, and that island were to drown, then the man must swim to safety, or he too will perish in the floods.

On the near bank is a vicious monster that will surely kill him.

On the far bank stands a saddled horse.

And the theory which Your Majesty most wisely put forward, in this instance, was that the fool would panic and swim towards the monster.

[Relieved]

I think that's it, Sire.

John is hardly able to drag his interest from the spread.

John Yes. Good. Excellent!

And tomorrow we shall put that very theorem to the test.
Oh, and Simon ...

Simon John?

John *honey-sweet* Bring that delightful young nephew of yours with you.
Perry? Is it Perry?

Simon I think you mean my sister's younger lad, Clarin Pelerine.
Is that the one? I have five nephews.

John *nods* Yes, yes, it was indeed that Pelerine boy. He's so obviously
a sports-lover. I'm wondering if we can't find a place for
him at my court.

Simon I'll have my man fetch him. Also, I was thinking that
Ayesbury Eyot would be almost under water by now. You
see, I fished there as a boy.

Walter *snaps fingers* Why, the very spot! It has both far and near riverbank,
too. That's perfect. Well done, dear Simmy.

John *still eating* Walter, organise it. For tomorrow morning. Find some
pathetic Saxon to be our victim, would you? And don't
forget to take along the Devil hounds.

Walter bows. John continues to chew, meditatively, looking about him. Then he seems to concentrate on Roland, who has resumed his game with Guy.

John *staring* Rollo, dear chap, what in **Hell** are you wearing?

Roland *stands proudly* Sire! I am attuning myself to ve ways of ve peasants, so
vat I may improve veir lot. For Your Majesty must
remember --

John hand up, cuts Roland short. John speaks emphatically

John If I hear just ***one more time*** that God spoke to you when we were all youths in Ireland, I'll personally wring your bloody neck!

Roland *grinning* My neck would be too tough for you to wring. Not wiff your delicate fingers.

John *grins, not at all offended at his tone* Well, I'd love to try.
[Shakes finger at Roland]

And you are a very saucy boy, Sir Roland.

John goes back to the food; he is now just eating due to boredom.

John How are my peasants, by the bye?

Roland *enthusiastic* Do you see all vat food vere? Way too much for all of us to eat.

When it's cleared away, I'll drive it myself to one of your villages so vat ve Saxons can get a good square meal out of it.

With your compliments. And because of vis, you are a very much-loved king and benefactor.

John *sardonic, with lift of eyebrows; scornful* Until some of my Norman knights get their Saxon daughters in the pudding club, that is.

Roland *a quirky smile* I've always done right by my bastards, Sire. We all 'ave.

Martin *chips in, taking up the theme* I've lost count of my by-blows, I'm afraid.

John *gasps* And you a cleric!

Guy *casual* Mine would fill a room.

Simon Well –

Simon is about to speak but is interrupted by Walter's servant tearing into the room. Head bowed, the servant drops down on his right knee, and speaks to the King.

Servant Sire, a vagrant woman has been taken into custody. She awaits you without.

Surging up to the servant, Walter violently kicks the serving man to the floor.

Walter *savagely* Worm! You **dare** to burst in upon His Majesty in this callow fashion? Get out of here, you scurvy dog! I'll have you locked up as a public menace, see if I don't!

The servant scrambles back to his kneeling position, looking scared but determined. King John shifts in his seat, interested. He speaks to the servant in a kindly way.

John *gently* Why do you bother us with such a judicial matter, knave? We dispense justice only on Wednesdays and Thursdays. And then at the Castle. Never here.

Servant *cowering and afraid of retribution* Sire! In light of previous occasions, if you'll remember, Your Majesty, you was very keen to try the case of such a young person. A person of the other persuasion, Your Worship.

Marty *astounded* "Of the other persuasion", say you?

Servant A tit person, Sire. What don't got no waterspout.

The servant winks very broadly and noticeably at the King. John is wide-eyed, and extremely surprised, mouth open.

Roland *aggressive* Vis fellow winks at you, Your Grace. Shall I frow 'im to ve Devil 'ounds?

The King has suddenly realised what this is all about, and signals to the other men to desist interfering with the servant.

John *leans forward* Oh ... Ah! Now tell us, you scallywag: is this woman whom you have arrested a comely wench or no?

Servant *nods eagerly* Very comely, my Liege. A most beautiful young woman.

John *lifts eyebrow* Young and beautiful, you say?

Servant *pleased to be able to confirm* Aye, Your Majesty. **Very!**

John *decisive* Then we must hold an especial session of our justice court.
We'll make our deliberations both **here** and **now**.

King John is wearing a turban, so Walter will have to stand behind John's regal chair, holding a gold coronet over John's turban. John lowers himself regally into a huge oak chair and disports the folds of his raiment precisely. The servant backs away, obsequiously.

Maggs (who is of course played by the Nerine actress) is wet from the rain, and her rough clothes cling to her. She is nevertheless a beauty in rags. Not touching her but standing either side of her are two burly guards in chain mail. The girl stands before the king, staring at him, uncertain of what to do.

Without ceremony, Roland moves forward and pushes the girl down by firmly pushing her shoulder.

Roland *sotto voce* Kneel, wench. Show ve proper respect for 'is Majesty!

Martin steps forward to perform his role as translator. He speaks to the girl hesitantly.

Martin Er ... Name ... Yclept ... You ...?

Maggs *to the King* Sire, I am able to speak with you in your own tongue. My name is Maggs, daughter of Cuthbert the Miller.

John *surprised* You are a Saxon girl?

Maggs Yes, Sire.

John And how is it that you are conversant with our language?

Maggs The beautiful Dame Magdeleyne instructed me, Sire. She lived at the Halvey Nunnery, in seclusion from the world.

John Indeed? Why does this Norman lady care enough for you to do that?

Maggs All her care for me is from Heaven now, you know.

I have helped her, and tended to her, Your Majesty, and

entertained her at sundry times.

John *fascinated,*
amused, appreciative

We are agog, gentlemen, to discover by what means this lovely Saxon girl "entertained" the beautiful Norman lady. Tell us, wench: how did you manage to amuse her?

Maggs

Why, Sire, with singing and dancing. I played the lute for her, to relieve her great melancholy. Then I helped her with her stitching. And to make her *really* happy, I told her the old fireside stories of my Gaffer. Stories of the old days of the Angles and the Saxons.

John *utterly captivated,*
leaning forward

Well ... I should certainly enjoy hearing of the "Old Days" ...

[Then snaps out of it]

Why was this young woman taken into custody?

Guard *stolid*

Sire, she was taken for a vagrant, being on Longemey's land where she shouldn't not have been.

John *to the girl*

Well? What have you to say about that accusation? Mmm?

Maggs

My Liege, Dame Magdeleyne told me that I could very well go for a tire woman in a great house. She wrote me out a letter of introduction for the Longemeys, she did, not so long before she went up to join the Angels' Choir.

John

A letter? Show it to us.

Maggs fumbles about then hands him a small piece of parchment, which the king reads.

John *to the guard*

Why was this girl arrested when she held such a letter? Did she show you this?

Guard *somewhat*
shamefaced

Yes, Sire, but I can't read.

John waves the parchment before handing it back to Maggs.

John *pontificating*
grandly

There's no crime here, and thus, no arrest. This fine Saxon wench is quite free to go about her business. Stand, my dear, and we shall dispense our justice and compassion with God's guidance.

[Maggs stands]

What a lovely creature you are, to be sure!

Now, before you run off to Longemey, you may stay here at our humble villa to brighten our days with your singing and dancing, if you so wish. We're afraid that we've nothing to set you a-stitching on ...

Perhaps the new Queen will give you some skeins of silk to unravel. Who knows?

Besides, you won't be happy there with those uncouth Longemeys.

John rolls his eyes and smirks to indicate that the smut-game is on again.

John *inveigling*

Weren't you telling us, Simon, that they are always jumping in and out of bed with each other?

Simon *taking up the theme*

The level of concupiscence in that household cannot be believed. Mistress Maggs must not go there.

Walter

I **had** heard that all the servants in that house had formed a smuggling ring. Contraband wine, perfumes and golden statuettes, My King.

Martin *over-dramatic*

Debts! Debts! Outrunning their means with extravagance beyond comprehension.

Smiling in keen apprehension of this folly, Maggs grins and joins in the folly delightedly.

Maggs

They set the dawgs on me, they did.

Guy

They water the wine, Sire, re'ash ve beef and pass orf veir

mutton as Spring lamb.

Roland *looks at ceiling* Stealing from ve church and giving ve proceeds of veir crime to ve poor

King John chuckles and points mischievously at Roland. Roland might indeed be serious!

However, as a lull occurs, Maggs decides to eclipse them all, and provides artistic actions with her words.

Maggs And I wanted to see just what sort of people they were. If they were good sorts or not. For a girl has to be careful these days.

Every one of the men (even including the guards) nods wisely.

Maggs So I crept around to the side of the house and peeked in at the master's bedroom. That's the very reason that I was taken up into custody, Your Worship, because I saw His Nibs, Lord Hardhanger, giving it to Lady Snotnose right up the bum.

Maggs looks triumphantly at the men. There is absolute silence.

The king clamps his lips together, desperate not to laugh and rolls his eyes from side to side, to see what everyone else is doing. Martin pretends not to have heard, and stands looking composed, staring at the ceiling. Roland, Guy, Simon and the guards are open-mouthed in total shock. Walter smirks, then suddenly breaks the silence with a crack of laughter, slapping his thigh.

John silences Walter with a humorous, but admonishing look. To the girl, King John is utterly gentle and kind.

John *smooth and pleasant* Then it is obvious to us that you must never work at that foul den of vice.

[Stands, goes to the girl and takes her hand, patting it.]

My dear Mistress Maggs, we'll find a bed for you for tonight; somewhere private and comfortable. Then you will join us at our sport tomorrow. We think you'll enjoy our

proffered treat ...

END OF SCENE

II, Scene ii: 1203, The River, With Heavy Rain Falling

Guy is rowing; he faces the camera. Behind him is Roland, poised over a snivelling Saxon (about 40-45 years old). The Saxon also faces the camera, crying and muttering.

Guy *whining* We always gets to do ve dirty work, don't we? I mean, you never sees Martin nor Simon muddying veir `ands.

Roland What's your gripe?

Guy *shouting* I say, why do we always get ve shit work?

Roland Just keep rowing, old Cock.

Roland addresses the Saxon, who has been muttering away, looking very distressed.

Roland And you shut your yap or I'll belt you acrost ve `ead again.

Guy *shouts* I fink `e's sayin' vat `e can't swim!

Roland Oh, really? Well, that'll make it an interesting experiment for `is Majesty, now won't it?

The Water Torture and the Saxon.

Our camera pulls back. There is a saddled horse standing quietly beside a male servant on the far bank. Near the boat, coming close to it, is the tiny eyot. Roland pushes and drags the struggling Saxon onto the eyot, which is now almost submerged. On the near bank, two vicious dogs snarl and lunge. These dogs are being restrained (with extreme difficulty) by two big guards. Farther back, King John and Maggs lounge under a tent/pavilion, surrounded by others. Clarin (who of course is played

© October 2011 Property of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE

THIS DOCUMENT IS SOLELY OWNED BY QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE and is intended solely for use as an entertainment. QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE retains exclusive and inalienable rights to this document, which may not be reproduced in any way without the express authorisation and permission of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE. Any disclosure, reproduction, copying, distribution, or other dissemination or use of this document or of the intellectual property contained in this document is strictly prohibited without the express authorisation and permission of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE. (www.qld-tm.net.au)

by the same actor who plays Norm) stands beside Simon. Clarin appears to be very concerned at the "drowning" exercise.

Clarin *appalled* Does His Majesty mean to drown this poor man?

Simon Hush, boy. Leave sweet Nature to take its ineluctable course.

Clarin *angry, through clenched teeth* Nature? This is nothing less than a murder, Uncle.

John is trying to see through the rain. We can make out (from this distance) the struggle to get the Saxon onto the eyot. He clings desperately to the boat. Now our camera is close to the boat.

Guy Look out! 'E's trying to 'itch a ride back wiff us. Get orf our boat, you bugger.

Roland pushes the man away, back onto the island. Then he (Roland) leaps athletically onto the boat. Guy slaps at the Saxon's hands with the oars. Finally, the man splashes about helplessly in the water. The camera's focus switches to John, who is delighted.

John *smiling, pleased* Let the ordeal begin! What say you, Martin? Far or near?

Martin Neither, Sire. I fear that he is a Godless creature and will sink to the bottom without making for either bank. And his dead remains will be given no shrift.

John *annoyed; flies instantly into a pet* But that's no good. How can we test my theory if people drown? Get rid of him and get me another candidate. At least one who can swim, this time.

Back to Clarin, who has stripped down. He makes for the river, while Simon tries to stop him.

Simon *to Clarin* For God's sake ... the King will –

Clarin *savagely* I'll not stand by, Uncle, and watch this poor wretch drown. Look at him! This farce must cease and cease now!

To Roland and Guy's amazement and consternation, Clarin rushes forward to dive into the water. Grabbing the man from behind (so that he too will not drown) Clarin drags and swims to get the man out at the far bank. All the while, the dogs bark and snarl in an excited frenzy. Clarin pulls the man

along the bank then up onto the horse. (We shall not spend any more time than necessary on this part of the scene). Clarin orders the servant to lead the man (who is slumped hopelessly over the withers) to his house.

Meanwhile, while this goes on, we see John looking confused then very angry. Focus is now on the King. He wants to put Clarin's head on the block and cut it off.

John *frantic with rage* Give me a sword, someone. Walter! Yours will do.

In the background, we can see Clarin being picked up by the boat, to be brought to the King. Walter solemnly hands John his sword, as Maggs reaches forward to just touch John's sleeve. John wears a face of thunder.

Maggs *jolly voice* Your Majesty. I know how eager you must be to **reward** this young man.

John *horrified* Reward him? Reward him? By God, young Maggs, I mean to have his hide for this piece of impertinent interference.

Maggs *pretending surprise* Really? But think, Sire. This is a most timely moment in the history of this great country. For here is a man who unites the Saxon and the Norman folk.

We are now one people under your august leadership: no longer divided and at odds with each other.

Under your rule, King John the First, England belongs to the English for the first time. You are an English King, my liege, as I am an English girl. Knight this young man, Sire, in memory of this dazzling occasion, and to reward him for his great deed of courage.

John *appalled* Knight this rogue? Are you out of your mind?

I suppose you'll want that pathetic, filthy Saxon made a baron as well.

Maggs Not at all, My Liege. But young Pelerine, Sire, represents our future.

England needs brave young men like him. Look how boldly
he faces his Doom.

John pauses, staring at Clarin, who is still stripped and wet, and is being brought to John by Roland and Guy. John is trying to make up his mind.

Martin Well said, young Miss Maggs. I also urge you to spare this
boy's life, my King. He has indeed displayed extraordinary
valour.

Walter *bored* Fortune favours the Fair, John. Methinks that he will bring
you good luck.

John *still uncertain,* Oh, very well, then.
frowning *[Sighs loudly]*

We shall honour this lad for his Christian courage. We shall
forgive him for trespassing upon the Saxon's ordeal, and
lay stress upon his nobility instead.

Who is his father? Is he the same old Pelerine who stood
shoulder to shoulder beside our brother some once or
twice, on divers military adventures?

Simon *now in the tent* Indeed yes, John. My sister Pelerine's second son.
with the others

Helped to his feet, still holding Walter's sword, King John looks Clarin over speculatively.

John *reluctantly* Yes, you are a beautiful specimen of manhood. 'Twould be
a pity to cut you off before your prime.

Kneel then, Clarin of Pelerine.

[Clarin does so, with head bowed]

In spite of your youthful enthusiasm, we are mightily
impressed with your knightly valour.

Pray daily that God will forgive your sins, continue in your

honourable deeds, and come to our court whenever you are summoned there.

The King casually touches Clarin on both shoulders and the head with the point of the sword.

John In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, I dub thee Clarin, Knight of King John of England and France.

[John lazily extends his hand.]

Arise, then Sir Knight, when you have kissed our hand.

Close-up of Clarin, unable to believe his deliverance, as he reaches to take John's hand and kiss the big ruby ring thereon.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene iii: 1203, Night: On the Dark Road back To The Villa

Rain beats down. A huge ponderous travelling coach rollicks along, with attendant guards on horseback.

Out of the wet verge, 20 or so peasant men rise up from the sedge and reeds, brandishing swords, pikes, spears and daggers. With a battle roar, they surge forward to attack the nobles in the coach.

As the guards rein-in to challenge the wild men, one of the attackers shouts brazenly.

Attacker Death to the traitor John Lackland! Kill the king! Kill them all!

Out of the coach leap Clarin, Guy and Roland. They bear swords and immediately defend the coach against the onslaught. They are quickly followed by Simon and Walter, who also fight the attackers valiantly with swords and daggers. The six guards continue the fight on horseback. All the men shout and grunt as they fight ferociously in the driving rain.

Camera close-up of the occupants of the coach. John has his arm around Maggs' shoulders. Both look extremely frightened as they watch the fight. Martin cannot be seen.

© October 2011 Property of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE

John *angry* Roland lied, saucy villain that he is.
Why, I'm no more popular with my peoples than are chastity belts at a bachelor party!
What do you do there, Martin? Will you not lend your weight to defend our royal person?

Martin stands, triumphant, bearing a heavy piece of lead as if it were a trophy.

Martin *pleased* Ah! Here it is! I need only this worthy weapon, Majesty, and I shall be right into the fray.

Martin climbs ponderously down from the coach, and immediately begins to bonk the peasants on the head with the lead weight whenever he has the chance.

But the fight is all but over by the time Martin joins it. Only two of the ruffians have managed to escape. All the rest are either dead or wounded. Clarin, with Martin in his wake, walks from body to body, dealing the coup de grace to each man with an impressive dagger.

The heavy rain continues. Walter, puffing, kicks the bodies one after the other.

Walter *savage* Scurvy scum! Dare you to endanger the person of your anointed King? To Hell you go!

Roland *to the guards* When you 'ave safely returned our party to ve villa, you will all return with ve dray and collect vese bodies. Ven you are to display vem in ve village as a warning to uvver would-be assassins.

Guard *voice-off* Certainly, Sir Roland. It shall be done as you command.

Inside the coach, as it renews its rumbling journey back to the villa, the men settle down again: breathless and panting. There is some vague laughter among them.

Simon Are we all whole, boys? No wounds.

Guy My 'ead 'urts ... but vat's all.

Maggs looks admiringly from one man to the next. But her special smile is for Clarin. He smiles back. King John coughs.

John *calmly* These farm boys thought to unseat us from our throne. How little they reckoned on our cunning, our wisdom. They died as poltroons, whiles we shone in the firmament as a beacon to weaker vessels.

[Strokes Maggs' hand]

When we return to our home, we'll pray. All of us. And eat.
Tuck, tuck, tuck

Camera closes-in on Clarin's face. He cannot believe what John has just said: how he has taken credit for personally vanquishing the peasants.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene iv: 1203, The Pelerine Fireside

Clarin's invalid brother Elmer, lies on a makeshift bed near the huge fireplace, tended by the 17-year-old sister, Annelise.

The small family are gathered together. Clarin faces his parents, arms akimbo, face stern and determined. His father holds a sheet of parchment.

Clarin *determined* I'd rather **die** than go back there. I can't imagine how my uncle stands it.

Mother They grew up together: John, Simon and Walter. Did you know that?

Father *gestures with the parchment* When the King summons you to his court, then you'd better just **go** to his court, my boy, and make the best of it.

Clarin But what in the name of all that's wonderful does he want **me** there for? He already has five worthies who jump at his command.

Mother He's obviously enchanted with your youthful good looks, my dear. If you'd had the years and the good sense to have had yourself seriously injured in battle or marred by some disfiguring disease, then he wouldn't want nor hide nor hair of you.

Clarín *appalled* Is that what it's going to take to escape that lunatic? I'd as soon take exile.

Father Greater men than you have graced the gallows for belittling John Lackland. The watchword then is: "Hold your peace".

Clarín No! It's over the seas for me now, I can see that quite clearly.

Father And where will you go?

Clarín Well, I could join up with some party of pilgrims, if I was lucky, and make my way to the Holy Land to smite those Saracen devils.

Elmer *weakly* Hear! Hear!

Or you might act out your concerns on the subject of the French king. Do you still think that he will invade England?

Clarín *defiant* Over my dead body!

Mother *appeasing* Dear Clarín, I have a notion. Did not the Duc de Reebes write to Simon, with the intention of sailing over from Normandy to visit His Majesty? They'll probably discuss Philip's designs on our little England.

Very well then! Would not this be the perfect opportunity to introduce yourself to de Reebes? Perhaps you could serve the Duc in some capacity or other; as his esquire or some such thing.

Elmer You are in an excellent position to beg for favours after winning the King's approval as you did. After the business with

that poor drowning man and the attack on the King's coach.

Father

Yes, yes. Sir Clarin Pelerine shall fight the French alongside the Duc de Reebes.

I like this turn of events very much. I'll present you with my Spanish fighting sword, Heraldo, and with my buckler, Spruce. We'll get you a new saddle and packs. How many horses have you?

Clarin

Only Gable, Sir. But I'll want none other. He's the stoutest steed in the country.

Father

Even so, you'll want to set up your stable when you get to Normandy.

Elmer *saddened*

Well, he may as well take Rowntree. There's scarce chance that I'll ever ride him again.

Annelise

I'll stitch you some colours. What livery has the Duc? Blue and gold, isn't it?

Clarin *touched*

Why, thank you, Elmer, Annelise. But hadn't we ought to wait and see if de Reebes wants me first?

Mother

Of course he'll want you. But he must *see* you to know that he'll want you. That is why you must go back to the court, Clarin.

Humour the king in this caprice of his. It's your best chance to promote yourself.

Father

Absolutely right! Pray constantly for God's help and mercy. And watch out for the full moon.

That divine who hangs about with the King is a good sort of chap. He'll put you in the way of undertaking your knight's vigil.

- Annelise Do you mean Martin of Lambden?
- Father On the full moon, you will pray for seven nights, and disport yourself virtuously for seven days. That must give you the right to bear arms and wear livery colours.
- I am very proud of you, my boy.
- Elmer And so am I. You will go to Normandy with the Duc and rout the feeble French.
- Father Hmph! If only they **were** feeble. But I'm afraid it is not so.
- [To Clarin]*
- And you must carry my own father's sacred cross, as he so presented to me in King Henry's time. God's power and the love of Jesus Christ will carry you through every battle, as they did myself.
- Clarin I'm not worthy of such an honour, Father.
- Father That poor, wretched Saxon who almost drowned at the King's hands would say that you were **very** worthy.
- Annelise *cheeky* If we could understand a single word that he said, that is!

END OF SCENE

II, Scene v: 1203, A Sunny day Outside the Roman Villa

The little bark boats dance in sun-glinting water of a man-made rill. John and Maggs kneel on silk cushions, playing with the boats. They are watched by the Duc de Reebes.

John is utterly happy: the only time we ever see him so. The King's four greyhounds frisk about, along with two wolfhounds which belong to the Duc de Reebes.

© October 2011 Property of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE

Martin and Augustin sit on a stonework seat, conversing in Latin. Guy and Roland have moved off ahead, in the direction of the farm.

Maggs Do you still have much land in France, Sire? Do you ever visit your French possessions?

John *smiling and benign* Hardly ever.

You see, my little rose, nasty old Philip would treat me as a vassal were I in France. But here, I have no overlord except for the Pope, and he doesn't ever visit England, thank God. I'm king of all that I survey.

Dicky was always flitting abroad on his merry crusades. Cost this country a pretty penny, he did, but no-one seems to mind. God spoke to him and told him to go. Whereas I ...

God is forever telling me that I'm to unite England, to make this country great. More's the pity, for all I dream of is a grand pilgrimage, with me at its head.

Maggs *quick look towards Augustin and Martin* What is the Latin for "ship", Your Majesty?

John *amused* It is "navis", my dear. Are you intending to add to your many accomplishments by learning classical languages?

Maggs Oh, no. However, I am thinking of a name for your fleet of ships. "King John's Navies" sounds very noble. You could transport your pilgrims to the Holy Land in your navies. Sir Simon told me that that is the very best way to do it.

John Of course it is. Much safer and less strenuous than crossing Europe.

Can you not see them in your mind, now? Colourful pennants fluttering in the breeze as we sail into the Mediterranean Sea,

just as the Ancients did before us. Our coats of arms blazing in that hot sun. I shall take you with me, dear little Maggs, as my mascot.

de Reebes *seeing an opening* Perhaps, *mon cher Jean*, you could better spare your warriors to fight in France?

The sun goes behind a cloud. John's face also clouds over. The King turns sharply, his mood changing immediately to sullen and petulant.

John *snappy and unsmiling* God's work first, Reeby.

de Reebes But didn't you say that God has other work for you? Uniting your England? Let me then take that further, my friend. God's work for you is in France, protecting all of your illustrious father's territories.

John *helped to his feet by de Reebes* Roger, you're treading on dangerous ground to bring old Henry into our discussion. I'll not go to France: never! I think only of the Holy Land, to complete Dicky's work.

de Reebes *trampling on* England wants you to defend your possessions in France. Your whole country rises in this cause. There cannot be a better time to strike out against that dog, Philip.

John and de Reebes then devolve into a heated debate, in old French. The camera moves back so that John and de Reebes are in the background.

In the foreground and the focus of the scene are Martin, Augustin and Walter, who move off discreetly, as there is now an awkwardness in that the King is behaving badly with his guest. The camera stays with Martin et al. Maggs trails the men, seemingly delighted with the country garden. Simon wanders along behind her.

But we are still able to make out a torrent of French words in the background, emanating from the King and de Reebes.

Walter *making* Monsire Augustin, you must tell us of the gossip from the

conversation Papal court. Any juicy scandal there?

Augustin *in precise, precious tones* Oh, there is always some nefarious business going on in that place, de Quincy. I've never seen a more venal court than that one. It has been a pleasure to escape from it, to be sure. Even if only to spend this mid-Summer afternoon in absentia.

Walter Well?

Augustin *affected titter of laughter* Oh, the gossip? Of course

Mmm.

[Off hand]

The highest cardinals in God's service share a scarlet woman and all get the pox. There are bishops who resort to pagan remedies in order to cure their scrofula, and esteemed clerics whose sexual proclivities **with each other** are beyond imagination. And all that His Holiness is concerned with is the dirt under his fingernails or the brown things in his nose.

Martin Ah! We must send our prayers to Heaven that His Holiness will escape these temporal snares.

Augustin *conspiratorial* Europe to a man is worried about Philip, as we all should be. The King of France not only grows very strong, but he also becomes very mad. Day by day he is more and more possessed. Mad for power and positively gluttonous for territory.

He hates most passionately the existence of English soil side-by-side with his. Jean's friend there does right to counsel him in favour of war with France. I would propound that it is totally unavoidable.

Walter *bitter, a harsh loud whisper* There's no money to finance even a May dance, let alone a full-scale continental war.

And here is John planning a massive pageant in the guise of a crusade. How to pay for it I know not! The Chancellor of the Exchequer is about ready to throw himself off a cliff from sheer naked frustration.

Augustin *still*
conspiratorial

His Majesty, King Philip, believes most earnestly that he possesses the talent to charm dragons and goblins from the dark hills of Ardoygne. His chef de cuisine no longer prepares gastronomic delights, messires, but rather spends his days and nights concocting evil-smelling potions with which King Philip tries to lure these creatures to his cause.

There is nothing at the French court nowadays, gentlemen, but witchcraft and megalomania.

Martin *sighs*

Our king remains that same petulant boy who must always get his own way; but at least he's manageable, to a point.

Walter *nods*

But add to that the devil which dwells within all of that Plantagenet line. That fiend which visits us from time to time to sap the very lifeblood from our veins.

[Nodding wisely]

Ho! Sir Martin of Lambden, you look astounded. But you know how that arch-enemy takes hold of our King and uncoils itself upon him like a snake.

[Different tone, turning to Augustin]

Aye! It will come to something if Philip and John were ever to meet on the battlefield. The halls of Hell will be as nothing to it, I think.

Walter and Augustin break off, forcing smiles, as they realize that John and de Reebes approach. A crack of laughter from John is heard. He slaps de Reebes merrily on the shoulder.

John

You never could win any argument with *me*, my Norman

cousin. Come! I want you to visit my little farm; it is pretty as well as useful. *Un bon convenance, messires.* Come, come: all of you!

Maggs draws near. She stops to admire the flowers on a bush. Simon reaches over her shoulder and snaps off a small branchlet from the bush. This he uses to stroke Maggs' breast.

Simon *softly* You are a very clever little girl and so I will share this advice with you, *gratis*. The king's love is of the moment and is sure to disappear as quickly as it came. Let him know **now** your desires and he will grant them. Do not waste this time in which you are basking in his sunlight.

Maggs All I want and need is a happy position in a grand household, Sir. That is all I ever wanted. They will find me hard-working and honest.

Simon Well said! Better that than to bear the king's bastards, as so many others have done before you.

John *looking about him* Where is little Maggs? Does she desert us?
No there she is. Tell the Honourable Duc de Reebes, sweet English rose, what you told us a few moments earlier.

Maggs Your navies, Sire?

John *instantly irritable and aggrieved* No, no, no. The future of my illustrious family, as predicted by that dribbling hag, your grand dam.

Maggs Yes, Sire. You must know, then, Monsire le Duc, that we found my gammer to be stammering and stuttering about the house, and so we --

John *frustrated, irritable* Make your point! Tell Reeby of my descendant: the one who is the most glorious king of England. John the Tenth or whoever it was.

Maggs *hurries through* She said that a king will come, descended from John's loins,

her speech who will be heart-breakingly shy, and who will stammer like a village idiot.

No-one will be in awe of this unprepossessing man; and yet, he will be the greatest King of England, and will lead his kingdom out of its darkest hour.

John *triumphant* You see? I've nothing to fear from Philip or from **any** king!

de Reebes How do we know that this old woman's prophecies will come to pass?

Maggs She is gifted with insight, Duc. Her predictions cannot be wrong.

John "John the Mighty", he'll be called. Or what about "John the Invincible".

Maggs *carefully* Your Majesty, she mentioned no name.

John *snapping angrily* She didn't have to. They'll forget everything about Dicky and all the other kings after I've finished.

~~~~~ Break ~~~~~

*Thus follows the arrival at the farm, which is a tiny fantasy castle. It is like a toy farm designed for children. There are miniature fields, complete with "bonsai" hedges in which grow different crops. A calf, a kid, a lamb, one pullet, and a tiny pony are led or carried about by frightened Saxons.*

*Clarin is found discussing warfare and battle strategies with Roland and Guy. Nearby are four full size horses, not part of the farm. The dogs have to be kept at a distance by some confused soldiers. Clarin, Roland and Guy stop sharply as the king and the rest of the entourage appear. King John points at this thing and admires that thing; all in the background.*

*Maggs wanders up to the horses. Clarin watches her, then walks quickly up beside her. He is shy, as he watches Maggs stroking one horse's mane.*

Clarín *hesitant* My uncle has told me that you interceded with the King for my life to be spared. I've to thank you, indeed.

Maggs Sir Clarín! You could not find in all the length and breadth of this land a more worthless specimen than that man whom you rescued. He is a lazy coward who makes his wife's existence a living Hell. It seems to me that you would have given your life for nothing in that case. What a waste that would have been.

Clarín *surprised* You are very plain-spoken about it, but yet I must thank you.

Maggs If you must thank me, then help me to extract myself from the King's clutches. My virtue is still intact, but I doubt it will survive this night.

Clarín *appalled* Good Lord! What ... whatever do you think that I can do?

John And there he is, that delightful boy who flouts our commands on a whim. Sir Clarín de Pelerine himself!

Clarín *bows* Good day to you, Your Majesty.

John We trust that you did not catch cold after your dramatic swim th'other day?

Clarín *slyly* Not at all, Sire. And I hope that knighting me on such a day did not cause you any ill-health.

John *loud shout of laughter* Upon my soul, are you never to give us the respect and obeisance which is our due?

Clarín I live only to serve Your Majesty.

John Good, good ... Reeby! Come and meet this dear boy with whom we are all enchanted. We wish to have him at Court, as another favourite to add to our already bloated collection. But he will not stay. He would rather, so he tells us, go a-warring with you. Now don't you find that extraordinary?

*The men bow to each other, sizing each other up.*

de Reebes                   It would give me great pleasure, My Blessed King, to take this young knight and train him. I have known the family of Pelerine for many years. No doubt he is a virtuous and valorous scion.

John                         You will see him at the lists tomorrow. He will take on Sir Roland and Sir Guy. They'll find out his mettle alright!

*[Turns back to Clarin, thoughtfully.]*

You will leave us as a boy and return as a man. How sad to think that your slim, lithe shape will thicken and become as hard as iron. Your soft, smooth skin will toughen under the relentless Norman sun, and turn to whitleather. And that lovely face ... ah me!

Well, well ...

*King John begins to walk off. Clarin looks at Maggs, who looks down-hearted. Clarin follows the King.*

Clarin *rushes into speech*               Sire, I would ask you for one boon before I sail to Normandy in the Duc's service.

*John stops, and turns back, amazed. The other members of the retinue freeze, awaiting the violent temper-tantrum which must inevitably follow.*

John *whispers*             One boon? And what is that?

Clarin *forceful and unafraid*                 Give me the girl, Majesty, before she is deflowered. Let her live at my father's home to give my family company while I am away.

*John's face works. Martin gasps. Simon looks concerned and steps forward to Clarin's side. John, apparently unable to believe what has just occurred looks about, even more amazed. The King is almost unable to speak.*

John                         The girl? You want that girl, Maggs?

*[Weak laugh]*

Do you want to deflower her yourself, then?

Clarín Oh no, Sire ...

*[Thinking up a convincing argument.]*

I mean **yes**. That's it! She saved me and ... and now ... now I want her. Yes, naked in my arms. That's what I want.

*John stares at Clarín in absolute thrall. Everyone else remains stiffened and is alert, save Walter who grins and shakes his head. It looks as though the King will fly into a passion at any second. With easy grace, de Reebes diverts the King.*

de Reebes Jean! Talking of humorous escapades and derring-do, do you still have that little jester with you? Lute? Or has he been fed to the wolves?

John *distracted* No, no. That idiot still plagues our Court, getting in everybody's road.

*The sigh of relief from everyone is evident.*

Reeby And Crome and ... what was the other chap's name?

John Crome and Passley. They attend us tonight at dinner, and no doubt will have us all roaring in mirth.

Martin And from what I've heard, Duke, they will be in fine form.

John We must rest with what remains of the afternoon. Back to the castle with all of you, to meet again at supper. Wine, wine, wine and tuck, tuck, tuck!

*The King sweeps away, then halts beside Simon. He frowns, with resultant mood-change.*

John *aside to Simon* That Saxon wench is by far too knowing for our liking, and we don't take too kindly to that quickness of tongue which we find in her. She is a confounded chatterbox, that one.

The King of England's women must be dainty and reserved.

We find that we are no longer in need of her attendance at

Court. Cuthbert the Miller shall have her back.

Simon *careful, but smooth*

May *I* not have her, Sire?

John *delighted*

Of course, dear Simmy. You may take her up the bum, if that is your pleasure. That method of attack seems to fascinate her more than somewhat.

Simon *pretending shame*

John, I cannot sink into deceit against my beloved King. My wish is to give her to my nephew. They are of an age and --

John *nudges Simon*

Cunning fox ...

Oh, if it must be. We wash our hands of it.

*The King turns and sadly surveys the scene. The party is moving forward, chatting and enjoying each other's company. Except for Clarin who stares at Maggs, and Maggs who perversely continues to pat the horse.*

John *in wonderment*

Simon, are they in love? Is it a love-match then? The beautiful Saxon girl and the handsome Norman boy?

Simon

He has up to now shown no interest whatsoever in females.

*King John throws his hands up. He cannot make it out at all.*

John *being John*

Wrap her up in a bright piece of cloth, then, and have her delivered to the home of Pelerine.

With your compliments.

No! Stay! First steps first. She is to be raised to the rank of Dame, and be called Magdeleyne, in honour of her former preceptress.

*[With wicked grin.]*

Oh, and warn young Sir Clarin that when he weds her, King John may claim *droits de seigneur*.

END OF SCENE

**Scene vi:** 1203, In The Castle, A Huge Hall Filled With The King's Well-To-Do Subjects.

*This scene is dedicated to an entertainment for the Duc de Reebes. It is rollicking and noisy. There is an "old English music hall" feel to the comedy in that the audience members willingly join in the fun.*

*This is a large, high-ceilinged hall in the castle. Long tables, benches, a huge five-way fire in the middle of the room (with grand chimney) and the tables are covered with large, colourful foods. Flambeaux everywhere for light, along with banks of candles. A suckling pig or two are brought in on the shoulders (spits) of merry servants. A troupe of boys dressed in middle-eastern costume pour wine. The crowd are all well-dressed, some portly, and well-disposed to the kind of humour which Crome and Passley present.*

*Crome is a big, solid man, ruddy-faced with a booming voice and long matted hair. Passley is tall, thin and phlegmatic. Wilfred is slim, and of medium stature.*

*The King's fool, Lute, is striking ridiculous postures on the dining table near the King. His Majesty swats the boy so hard that Lute falls off the table, rolling on the floor. As he does so, the audience members nearby kick at him, laughing cruelly.*

*A solemn man (like a major domo) in black appears, flanked by boys who beat small drums or shrilly toot tin whistles. The noise which the boys make stops, and the major-domo bows gracefully.*

Major Domo *sonorous*    Your Majesty, the comic actors are without.  
*voice*

*In response, the entire crowd and the king and his party shout back.*

Entire crowd *shouts*        Without what?!  
*eagerly*

*To a standing ovation and loud laughter, Crome, Passley and Wilt stumble into the hall, with their knees tied together.*



*In the hall, the crowd begins to settle. Wine and food are brought to the tables by an army of the colourful boy servants.*

*At this lull, Reebie whispers privately to the King, then quietly makes his way back to his seat.*

*Crome and Passley appear unexpected alongside the great table of the King. They have surprised everyone. Crome rings his bell loudly, and the mirth level rises again.*

Crome *very loud*                      What do you think that the gummy-mouthed Duke just  
*whisper*                                      secretly told our putty-bottomed King?

Passley *very loud*                      Gummy said to Putty: "If you don't stop your majestic  
*whisper*                                      **farting**, your Majestic Highness, then I'll push a Majestic  
cork right up your Majestic arsehole!"

*Amidst roars of laughter, especially from the King and de Reebes, the men turn their backs on the audience and proceed to emit a hideous range of squelchy and booming farts.*

END OF SCENE

## **Scene vii:** 1203, Preparation For The Jousting Practice

*Clarín and Guy are being strapped into old battered armour for the practice session. They are using a park in the castle grounds. Sir Roland, dressed correctly for a joust, in full shining armour, with his helmet and visor beside him, kneels in earnest prayer, with tears coursing down his face.*

Guy *nodding towards*                      Look at vat. It'd fair break yer `eart, vat would.

*Roland*

Clarín                                              Do you mean Sir Roland at prayer? I'm not sure that I  
understand you. I myself always pray before a joust. And I  
would have thought that many others do likewise.

Guy                                                But it's not for `imself that `e prays, yer see. It's for Mary, `is  
dead love.

*[Silence for a second or two]*

I've long 'ad me suspicions about 'er deaf. But don't say nothin' to Sir Rollo about it, 'cause 'e won't 'ear it.

Clarín

Do you suspect that she was murdered?

Guy *nods*

You're dead lucky to be goin' away to fight. I'd give anyfing I possessed to be goin' wiff you. But us five "favourites" is tied 'ere to the King 'and and foot, we are.

Didn't you never wonder why we was all unmarried? We weren't permitted to get married on account of our service to ve King. One or other of us 'as to put 'im to bed every night. That's 'ard to do, I 'spose, if you was a married man wiff a family. So none of us never married.

Rolly-Rollo was the only one to come close. 'E told ve king, and 'Is Majesty said 'e was ever so pleased for Rollo and 'is Mary. 'E never liked 'er, but, 'Is Majesty didn't. She was too scared of 'im and always backed away, cryin' when 'e come near 'er. 'E didn't like vat at all. Much better to be brave-faced, like your little Maggs. I doubt 'e'll ever 'urt 'er.

But six weeks later, after Rollo declared 'imself, Mary was dead. Stone dead. Vey gave it out that she 'ad contracted a fever. That was no fever! Poisoned, vat's what she was.

*By this time, they are mounted and trotting out to the middle of the field.*

Clarín

Good God! Did the King have her killed, then?

Guy

That's what I fink, but Rollo won't 'ear of it. Says that 'Is Majesty is a proper anointed King, so 'e can't countenance any crimes what go against God. Ovverwise, God'll 'ave 'is vengeance on 'im.

Clarín

It is my belief that the high and the mighty decide according

to their own interests what is and is not the will of God.

Guy Sir Clarin de Pelerine, you are so right in what you say. I've fairly lost count of ve murders and mayhems vat John Lackland 'as forced me to undertake.

All 'is shit work, vat's what I gets. And 'oo does ya fink will go to 'Eaven, ven? 'Im or me?

Clarin I'm no theologian, but I'd say neither of you.

Guy Too right! And me in trouble wiff God all a-cause I did what I was told to do by a proper anointed king. It don't make no sense to me.

*They salute each other and ride onto their positions. They joust. King John and de Reebees, with attendants and dogs can be seen on horseback in the background.*

*Long shot of the beautiful surrounding woods.*

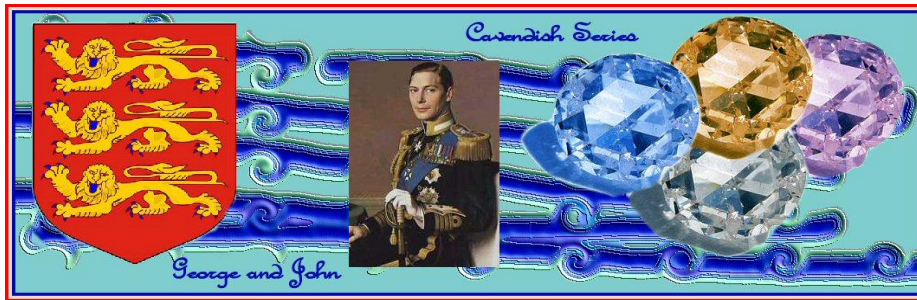
END OF SCENE

END OF ACT II

---

© October 2011 Property of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE

THIS DOCUMENT IS SOLELY OWNED BY QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE and is intended solely for use as an entertainment. QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE retains exclusive and inalienable rights to this document, which may not be reproduced in any way without the express authorisation and permission of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE. Any disclosure, reproduction, copying, distribution, or other dissemination or use of this document or of the intellectual property contained in this document is strictly prohibited without the express authorisation and permission of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE. ([www.qld-tm.net.au](http://www.qld-tm.net.au))



## ACT III

### III, Scene i: 1952, The Bethany Hospital

*A swish hospital room (obviously expensive). Banks of flowers, baskets of fruit, and get-well cards fill the room. A bored man of about 30 sits in a chair with his legs stretched out, reading a glossy magazine. This is Nerine's brother the Honourable Michael Cavendish, ex Brigadier.*

*Nerine flickers open her eyes.*

Nerine *with difficulty*      Oh, hello.

Michael                      Hello to you. I say, do you know who I am?

Nerine *slight smile*        You're my brother, the Honourable Michael Bevan.

*Michael folds away the magazine to concentrate on his young sister.*

Michael                      And when was I born?

Nerine *thinks*                4th April, 1921, I seem to recall.

Michael                      That'll do. Phew! You gave us a bit of a scare (I can tell you).  
You've been down and out for more than three days, and the doctors haven't been able to make out what has been the matter with you.

Nerine                        I've been with King John.

*Michael nods in order to humour Nerine.*

Michael *ironic* Ah well; that explains it. That in fact was my initial diagnosis, but funnily enough, these doctors here at Bethany weren't having any of it.

Nerine *weak laugh* You're too clever by half ... I don't remember how it happened. My passing out, I mean.

Michael You were fiddling with some of Father's clutter at the work shed near The Wash. Next thing, they found you on the floor, dead to the world. Wolf was quite cut-up about it, if dogs have emotions, that is.

Nerine My Gosh! So ... I don't remember any of that. Not the ambulance, nor the ---

Michael I rather think that there wasn't an ambulance. One of the workers drove you and Dad straight here to the hospital.

Nerine *can't understand* Oh ... Where's Mother? Is Brian here?

Michael Our mother, God love her, is resting (as we speak) owing to her having been at your bedside for the past three days without getting any sleep.

Nerine Oh, good heavens! The poor old thing!

Michael I'm supposed to telephone her the moment you open your baby blues. However, much better let her sleep on, since you seem to be as right as a trivet. At least, your brain is ticking away as usual.

Nerine Yes, leave her in peace, poor soul. Now, I ought to try to stand up and walk about, I suppose, but I really can't be bothered.  
And my affianced?

*Michael looks away. He coughs for effect as he raises his eyebrows.*

Michael                    Hmm, Brian ... Busy in the City, running his little ne'er-do-well schemes, I should imagine.

Honestly, Neen! What on earth made you hitch yourself to that ghastly person? He's not at all like any of the menfolk in our family. How could you find him in the least attractive?

Nerine                    He was utterly charming when I met him in Paris.

Michael                    You were probably homesick and the sound of his rather twee English accent sent you skyrocketing. Was that the way it was?

Nerine                    Yes, actually, you have it in a nutshell. Is he so very dreadful? I honestly can't remember ...

*Michael nods towards the banks of flowers in the room.*

Michael                    Take a gander at this hothouse collection, then pick out the most revolting floral tribute you can see. That'll be the one from him.

And mind! He had some uniformed personage who seemed to have a rod stuck up his backside to deliver it. Didn't bring it to his beloved fiancée in person at all.

Nerine *laughs out loud*    Then I'll have to throw him over, if you disapprove so vehemently. Besides, I've a new love now. Brian would only get in the way.

Michael                    Anyone I know? Jack Littlemace?

Nerine                    God no! How could you imagine ... No. This chap is the most wonderful man who ever lived. I'm head-over-heels in love ... Don't look so thrilled. I met him in 1204, or thereabouts.

Michael                    Where's that?

Nerine                    Not **where**, but **when**.

*[Excited, tries to sit up]*

Listen, Mike. If I'm to be incarcerated in this bed for any length of time, I'll need books: lots and lots of books. We must have hundreds of books in the library at home on King John.

Michael Our King John? The English one? Bad King John who, in company with the Sheriff of Nottingham, routed Robin Hood?

Nerine The very same. If you believe those old legends. What else do you know about him?

Michael *purses lips then shrugs shoulders* The barons made him sign the Magna Carta and he lost vast territories in France. He was a thorough bounder, that one. I rather think he was Richard I's youngest brother. Oh, and he was the son of Henry II and of his queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine.

Nerine *thrillingly* And had the temper of a thousand fiends, and a bunch of hangers-on who were delightfully droll. John's was the most exciting court in all of Europe, I'll bet.

*[Before Michael can speak]*

Michael! Go home and allay all the fears about me and bring back armfuls of history books on the Plantagenets. I need yards of writing paper, along with a shoe-box full of pens. And hurry, hurry, hurry!

END OF SCENE

---

© October 2011 Property of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE

### III, Scene ii: 1952, The Langtree Restaurant

*[Here, Norm and Nerine will finally meet.]*

*This scene takes place in a very stylish restaurant. Lord Cavendish is seated at a well-presented table, set for 6. He is going over the menu in a ponderous way. Nerine, stylishly dressed, approaches and takes her seat.*

*It is important to remember that Nerine has NOT seen Norm's face up until this point. When she does see him for the first time, she is stunned to find that he is Clarin's alter-ego. However, Norm has of course already seen her, knows nothing of Clarin or Maggs, and it is blatantly obvious that he is enthralled by her beauty.*

*Throughout this scene, the drink waiter hovers about, taking orders and delivering drinks, as befits the conversation.*

Nerine *bright, airy*                      Just telephoned to Brian. He says that all plans are changed, and that he can't make lunch. Sorry and all the rest of it, but something's on at the Ministry and he's needed. Blah, blah, blah. So it's just you, Michael and I. Luncheon for three.

Cavendish                                      Hmph! You don't seem too downcast at being so callously dumped.

Nerine                                              I'm not, actually. Michael and I agreed the other evening that I ought to toss Mr Fenwick over. None of my menfolk like him, which one would imagine is a somewhat insurmountable drawback to lasting love.

Cavendish *roundly*                              I **certainly** don't like him. He's after something. Does he think that if he marries you that that will make him a rich man? You'd better disabuse his mind of that evil thought, my dear.

Nerine *bright*                                      Oh, no! I'm constantly telling him that I'm a pauper. Anyway, "if in doubt, throw him out", as they say. So, he's out!

*Here, Nerine slips off her engagement ring and pops it ostentatiously into her purse. Looks about, with great pleasure.*

Nerine This is a bang-up eatery, I must say. What are we celebrating?

*Lord Cavendish flops the menu in front of Nerine.*

Cavendish Your recovery from a near-death experience, I suppose. And if you mention King John just once more, I'll send you home in a taxi-cab.

Nerine *pretending to be affronted* I've no intention of talking History. What a funny conversation we're having, Pater!

Cavendish And it's 6 for luncheon, not three. You'll have the pleasure of finally meeting your rescuer, the Australian engineer who's running my project. And Geoffrey is linking-up with George in the City, so they'll pop in for a bite, as well.

By my calculation, that makes 6 of us. An even half-dozen.

Nerine Splendid!

*The drinks-waiter arrives to dole-out a whiskey for Lord Cavendish and a tall glass of Pimms for Nerine. A large pot of beer has already been ordered for Michael. It sits on the table.*

Cavendish I took the liberty of ordering you a Pimms, my dear. I hope that's to your taste? I know your mother loves a Pimms.

Nerine *putting aside the menu* Yes, t'rific. I'm up for the roast beef: sounds scrumptious.

Cavendish That might be the best choice all round: I was thinking the same myself. Ah! Here's Michael.

*Michael arrives. He pulls off his hat as he speaks.*

Michael Hello, hello! Bit busy in the City today. Father ... little Sis ...

*He gives his sister a hearty kiss on the cheek, then extends his hand for a warm handshake with his father. Cavendish summons the waiter as Michael sinks gratefully into his chair. Lord Cavendish waves vaguely in the direction of the orphan pot of beer.*

Cavendish That beer's for you.

*Michael looks about him as he takes the pot and drinks. Nerine duly passes the menu to Michael.*

Michael Smashing! How are we all? Nice place.

Nerine Here's the bill of fare, Michael. We've both opted for the roast beef. And yes, we're all chugging along in rude good health.

Cavendish Order up big! After all, I'm footing the bill.

Michael *rubbing his hands delightedly* Good work! Hmmm, and I'll join you for the beef, so long as there's lashings of hot English mustard as accompaniment.

*Cavendish gestures to the waiter, who quickly comes to the table. The order is given sotto voce.*

Nerine "Beer"? What plebeian tastes you have developed, *mon cher*.

Michael Comes from all those years in the desert. Where's your beau?

Nerine *airily* Not coming. Held up at work, so I'm giving him the shove.

Michael Right! Well that's a grand start to the meal, I must say. Never liked that man, especially not as a future in-law.

Nerine *self-righteous* He simply wasn't up to scratch.

Michael *insouciant* And couldn't tell the oyster fork from the soup spoon. Just completely lacking in class.

*Lord Cavendish smiles broadly. He chuckles to himself. He really does hugely enjoy his children's company.*

Cavendish I've more or less told my Australian employee to meet us here. You know, that engineer fellow: Norm Yardley. Give him a treat after all his hard work.

I found out by chance that he was coming to the City for some shopping and business, so I invited him along. Thought he might entertain the not-much-lamented Brian. Anything to spare me from having to listen to Fenwick blather on about his supposed central role in maintaining this country's financial stability.

Michael *drinking his beer* Now he can entertain me instead.

Cavendish You'll all be able to have a chat about the War. This engineer fellow was a sergeant in Palestine, serving with the Australian Army, of course.

Nerine *pretends to frown* I've always been worried about meeting someone from Down under. Does he walk upside-down, then?

Michael *smirking* And shall I label his oyster fork and soup spoon?

Cavendish Don't talk such nonsense! He's just a rough diamond, that's all. You must get him to tell you about what happened the other day, when he failed to recognise the King.

Ah! Here they are!

*The door of the restaurant opens, revealing Geoffrey Bevan and George Danton standing in the doorway, looking about. They smile when they descry the Cavendish table and wander over. There is another round of handshakes and kisses, with the usual "Hello"s and "How de do?"s.*

*Michael is delighted at the arrival of George and Geoffrey. Cavendish signals to the drink waiter, holding up two fingers and nodding. The new arrivals will each be served a glass of whiskey and soda. The men are all smoking cigarettes.*

*There is general insubstantial chit-chat around the table. The family members are merry and delighted in each other's company.*

*Then follows the arrival of Norm Yardley. Norm stands in the restaurant, hesitantly twisting his hat about in his hands. He is dressed in a comfortable suit and tie; he looks quite respectable, but also a trifle discomfited. Lord Cavendish waves to him, and with a broad smile, Norm gives his hat a bit of a wave in return. He acts a little like a fish out of water. Without his usual confidence, he approaches the table.*

|                                        |
|----------------------------------------|
| Nerine Is Aghast To Meet Clarin Again. |
|----------------------------------------|

*Just as Cavendish begins the introductions, the camera focuses on Nerine, such that the men's voices are off screen. Nerine is horrified. She stands shakily.*

Nerine *completely aghast* Clarin? What do you do here?

*Fortunately, no-one has heard Nerine's outrageous outburst. The camera swings back to the men, amid handshakes and introductions. A pot of beer is being handed to Norm by a smiling waiter.*

Cavendish And my lovely daughter, Nerine, you've already met. My pet, this is the gentleman who so gallantly rescued you not long ago. Norm Yardley, my dear.

*Norm turns to Nerine, putting the beer pot onto the table, and extends his hand.*

*In complete shock, Nerine shakes her head, not accepting Norm's outstretched hand. Nerine whispers: "No", trembling with emotion.*

*Now there is a slight embarrassment. Nerine has effectively refused to shake Norm's hand, and the members of her family have all noticed this. Uncertain how to proceed, Norm lets his hand drop, but fixes a smile.*

Norm Hello again, Miss Cavendish. I'm glad to see that you're no worse the wear after your turn.

*Nerine is unsmiling, cold as ice, not looking at Norm. She shakes her head again. This is so weird for Nerine that she is lost, self-absorbed.*

Nerine How do you do? It's Bevan. My name is Bevan. Please don't confuse my surname with my father's title.

*It is now up to all of the English gentlemen to put Norm at his ease. Everyone sits. Only Geoffrey and George give Nerine sympathetic glances.*

Cavendish *laughs* Well, he's not to know that.

I suppose you find all of our nobility very confusing, eh, Yardley? Don't have many lords and ladies in the Colonies, now do you?

*Michael shoots Nerine a very speaking look; however, Nerine is oblivious. She continues sullen, cold and unable to meet Norm's eye. From the time he meets her, Norm's eyes and face reveal that he is of the opinion that she is a stuck-up bitch, for all her beauty. But he cannot take his eyes off her.*

*The camera sweeps 360 degrees around the table, allowing the meal to pass very, very quickly. Any conversation we hear is scattered and inconsequential.*

*Then, a few more snippets of conversation, when they have finished eating, to get us to the door, ready to leave. It's obvious that Michael and Norm have hit it off, and are now great chums, with Cavendish interspersing a word or two and laughing jovially. Nerine says nothing and concentrates on her plate. Sometimes she must dab the corner of her napkin into her eyes.*

*The diners, apart from Nerine, stand, smoking, and wander over to the door.*

Michael ... then you went on to Tobruk? To fight Rommel? Fascinating!

Norm They called us "Rats", because we lived in holes, I suppose. It was hard going, but we had some fun. Always making game of the British officers, I'm afraid.

Michael *laughs loudly, to* Which is to say chaps like me!  
*Norm's appreciation*

*The two young men shake hands warmly.*

Michael Well, I trust we'll meet again, Yardley. I'll manage to catch up with you at Father's site, no doubt.

Norm Yes, I hope so. Then we can share some more yarns about the Middle East.

*Norm turns to Lord Cavendish. The two men shake hands.*

Norm Thank you, Sir. That was very kind of you to shout me lunch like that.

Cavendish That's alright. Glad you could join us.

And you know the way from here to Oxford Street, I take it?

Norm *laughing* Yes. Michael drew a map of London for me on the tablecloth.

Good-bye! See you back at work tomorrow, Sir.

*Norm takes his leave.*

*Nerine walks quickly up to the remaining men, sifting about in her handbag. She looks about, frowning. George sidles up to her. Geoffrey stands back a little, watching Nerine keenly as he smokes.*

George *carefully*            Neenie, I understood from Bessie that you'd recently suffered some kind of fainting fit. And that you'd had a very bad dream as a result. Is that so?

Nerine                        Yes, George. Well, no not really. I mean, the dream was thunderously wonderful. But I did indeed faint away.

*[Looking about her, anxious.]*

That's what I wanted to talk to Mr Yardley about. But I don't see him ...

Michael *very harsh*        You were a bit short with Yardley, weren't you?

Nerine *anxious*            Was I? But where is he? I want to explain something ...

Michael *coldly*             Yes, but you could at least have been polite to him. Where were your manners? Talk about "glacial".

Cavendish *to Nerine*        I have to agree with Michael. I hope that you're not becoming a snob, my dear. You know, that's the very man who jumped into action when you fainted not long ago. Took charge completely. Carried you out to the car, drove you to the hospital ...

*Nerine is blushing and upset, holding her hands to her cheeks*

Nerine                        Oh, dear. Where is he?

Michael *dismissive, heading to the door*        Well, you were so stony cold to him that he couldn't wait to get away. And no more can I blame him!

Nerine *nervous*             He ... he was asking about Oxford Street. I might be able to catch him if I run like the wind. I loved him so very, very much.

*[Calling back as she tears off]*

I'll make my own way home; you go ahead without me.

*As Nerine dashes off into the distance, along the street, holding her hat, she is watched by her father, brother, half-brother and brother-in-law. All these men have exited the restaurant and are now hovering on the steps.*

Michael *confused* Did Neenie just blurt out that she **loved** Yardley? Can that be right?

George *watching Nerine rush off* I think so ...  
Ah! That's a shame. We wanted to have a deep-and-meaningful with her.

Geoffrey Bessie holds that she's been on some sort of spectral journey into the past ...

Cavendish *snorts* Oh, piffle! Load of rubbish!

Geoffrey *sotto voce, touching his left upper arm* "Piffle", is it?

*Cavendish walks away.*

Michael Dad and I will motor home together. I must slip down to home-farm this afternoon. We have a very beautiful and beloved mare that's about to drop her foal.

*Michael follows his father as the two other men begin to ascend the steps.*

Geoffrey *somewhat frowning* Then ... Nerine is fine?

*Michael stops on the footpath to call back.*

Michael Yes, she is now. Been off with King John, so she tells me.

*[Laughs merrily]*

Whatever is to become of our young maidens, eh? King John!

I'll see you gents later!

*Michael strides off in pursuit of his father. Geoffrey and George Danton are frozen in their ascent of the restaurant steps, looking anxiously towards where they last saw Nerine.*

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene iii: 1952, Busy London Street.**

*Here, Nerine must explain her coldness to Norm.*

*We next see Norm striding along towards the camera, seeming to enjoy himself. From behind him, we see Nerine, sprinting along, still holding her hat, trying to catch up with him. When she does so, she is all out of breath.*

Nerine *shouting from a distance*      Mr Yardley! Mr Yardley!

*Norm looks back, surprised, and stops, snatching his hat from his head out of respect.*

Norm *surprised*                      Miss Cavendish? I mean, Miss –

Nerine *puffing, really out of breath*      Mr Yardley! Please, please forgive me for my being so positively rancid at luncheon. I behaved appallingly and I'm so very sorry.

Norm *stunned*                      Miss Bevan ... you weren't all **that** bad, after all. Forget about it; I'm a big boy.

*Norm gives a small laugh, then puts his hat back onto his head. He nods politely to Nerine, then turns and continues to walk at a good pace. Nerine hesitates then trots after him. She is in total dither.*

Nerine *desperate*                      No, I was so very rude to you ... and I wanted to explain ...  
And I haven't even thanked you for being so magnificent that night when I passed out.

Norm *forces a smile*                      Well, I was glad to be of service, Miss Bevan.

Er ... I'm sorry that you've had to run like this. You'd better find

a park bench and have a spell.

Nerine                               It's alright. I needed the exercise after all that heavy lunch.

*Norm smiles and nods. He once again touches his hat, then heads off again. Norm strides along manfully, unaware that the girl is keen to keep up with him.*

*Nerine runs up to Norm and grabs his sleeve, causing the surprised man to stop once again. This is an utterly beautiful moment: the man is so affected by Nerine's beauty, and she is pleading with Norm with her eyes. They stand still like this for a couple of seconds, eyes locked. Norm's emotions overcome his common sense as he stares downwards, drinking-in Nerine's breathless beauty. Then Nerine speaks and the spell is broken.*

Nerine                               Please, ***please***, Mr Yardley! I have to talk with you! It's just so important, that I tell you ...

Norm *giving in and relaxing*                            Alright, then. Fire away.

*They are both calmer now, and in control of their emotions. Norm jams his hands into his trouser pockets as he strolls along. Nerine cautiously slips her hand into the crook of his arm. The man and girl seem to realize that they can speak without embarrassment, as if they are old acquaintances.*

Nerine *smiling sweetly*            Good! Now, in which direction were you going? May I accompany you and we can chat as we walk?

Norm                                 I was headed towards Oxford Street.

Nerine                                Splendid!

*They stroll along companionably. Norm has slowed down somewhat for the girl's sake.*

Nerine *big breath*                    Let's go back about four years ago.

I made a flying visit to your work shed, looking for Father. I suppose that at the time I was rather short of funds, or some such thing. At any rate, I was at a loose end, fiddling about with some of the rubble that they'd found, when a pin (I think it was originally used to secure a lady's cloak or shawl) ... well, as I

was saying, this cloak pin pricked me. In the finger.

And it was really strange because just then, I heard voices, right above me. It was me: that is, a girl like me. And ... and King John, actually.

*Norm looks a bit bemused.*

Norm *sagely*

Ah!

Nerine

No! Don't jump to conclusions. I'm not loopy. There's more.

So, we return to the present day. That day when you met the King, our King George, and you didn't recognize him, as he'd aged so dreadfully ... You see, he'd brought some lovely drawings and sketches with him. He showed them to Father and me. It was so wonderful, looking at those antiquities, sitting beside the King.

And I had some paintings in a book which I'd picked up in France. His Majesty, Father and I spent a superb half-hour studying them as well. It was wizard!

Norm

He's a good bloke, if you'll pardon me for saying so.

Nerine

Of course ... I agree. He's marvellous.

And then, swept away by the pleasure of that afternoon, I completely forgot **not** to touch the trinkets. And I started to play with an old bauble on a chain. Now how harmless could **that** be? I ask you!

Yet, believe it or not, that chain literally leapt out of my palm and bit me on the heel of my hand. Without pause, I was in medieval England, at a restored Roman villa on a very wet day. And there was King John with his hangers-on.

I mean, I was **there** with them. Not "The Honourable Nerine Christiana Bevan", but as a Saxon girl called Maggs. But

honestly, it was *me!*

*Norm is non-committal. He is not impressed, and not really interested*

Norm Oh, really?

*Nerine (sensing Norm's lack of interest) is desperate to convince him.*

Nerine You were a young Norman knight whom the King found ... er ... meritorious.

Norm *stops walking* Look, Miss Cavendish, Bevan, I mean ... I don't know much about –

*Nerine and Norm stop. She reaches out to hold the material of his jacket sleeve, rubbing it between her fingers. Norm looks down at her hand on his arm. Nerine rushes her speech, beseeching him to hear her out, as if she knows that she is on her last chance to convince him.*

Nerine Seriously! You were in the dream as well. I saw you again today, as your real self, and I almost fainted again!

How on Earth could I have pictured you in 1200 and something when I only really met you for the first time today, at lunch? I know it sounds ridiculous, even preposterous ... but how can it be so?

Norm *sighs and scratches head* I've no idea.

Nerine And you see, that's why I was so hateful to you at luncheon, because I was in shock; recognizing you as I had.

Look, Mr Yardley, I want to have another try. Will you be my witness? That'll prove to you that I'm not off my head.

Norm *surprised* What, prick your finger again at The Wash? You want another crack at it?

Nerine That's it!

Norm Is that safe? You've already been to hospital once before.

Nerine *ignoring the safety aspect* Oh, let's not bother about that. Will you? Later in the week?

Norm *shrugs his shoulders* If you like ...

Nerine Fine, then! We'll meet at The Wash as soon as I can manage it. You can stand beside me whilst I touch the jewellery.

Norm And when you pass out again, I've got to cart you back to the hospital?

*Nerine laughs brightly now that the tension is off.*

Nerine *arch* You can do whatever you like with me.

Norm *grins, with head to one side* That's a bit of an open-ended offer, Miss Bevan.

Nerine *smiling naughtily* Yes, isn't it?

Thank you. We'll meet at The Wash.

*Nerine shakes hands with the bemused Australian. She slips away, leaving him to watch her, dumbfounded.*

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene iv: 1952, A Dark Projection Room In The Palace.**

*Only the projector is lit, and the room is filled with smoke. King George (unseen) watches on old black-and-white newsreel film the landings in Normandy on D-Day. We see the actual beach on which Roland and Walter will land. King George coughs and wheezes. He is obviously very ill. From the dark, we hear a servant speaking to His Majesty.*

Servant Your Majesty, may I get you something for that cough, Sir?

King George *utterly* Just a brandy will do for me.  
*wearily*

END OF SCENE

### III, Scene v: 1952, At The Wash, Late At Night

*Norm and Nerine stand in the work shed, beside the bench where the relics are laid out and labelled. Nerine looks apprehensive and shy. Norm is tired, needs a shave and he is dirty. He is about to pour beer from a long-neck bottle into a glass.*

Norm Miss Bevan, would you like a glass of ale?

Nerine No thanks. I've just finished a cup of tea.

Norm I'd drink this straight out of the bottle if you weren't watching me, you know, Miss.

Nerine My name's Nerine. And please drink your beer in any way you choose.

Norm *nods and drinks* Rightio. And yes, I know your name. The Honourable Nerine  
*from the bottle* Christiana Bevan. But in return, you'll have to call me Norm.

Nerine That's a wonderful idea. I say, I can't tell you how nervous I am.

Norm There's no need to go through with it, then.

Nerine No, I don't mean that I'm nervous about it happening. It's just that I'm quite terrified that it won't work.

Norm The dream?

Nerine Yes. What I want is to pick up from where I left off. But I'm half afraid that I'll dream the whole thing again, over and over, if

you see what I mean. Or worse: not even dream at all.

Norm *shrugs his shoulders* Give it a burl, then. No use worrying about it.

*Nerine looks up at Norm in a shy way. From Norm's point of view, he is now relaxed and jovial (owing to his drink of beer).*

Nerine You don't believe it, do you?

Norm Not yet. But I'm keeping an open mind. Our Aussie blackfellas have some strange magic that seems to go alright. Let's put it this way, ***I'm open to suggestion.***

Nerine *bites her lip* I ought to tell you, Norm, that although we were both very young, you and I were somewhat interested in one another back then, in King John's time.

Norm Were we? I'll remember that. Moreover, last time we met you told me that I could do whatever I liked with you when you fainted.

*Nerine replies with a soft laugh. She looks nervously at the array of old trinkets spread out before her.*

Nerine Which one shall I go for?

*Norm casts a knowledgeable eye over the selection.*

Norm Let's see, now. Something with a bit of class about it, I reckon. Oh, here's one.

*Norm jabs himself several times with the pin of the brooch. Drops of blood appear on the back of his hand.*

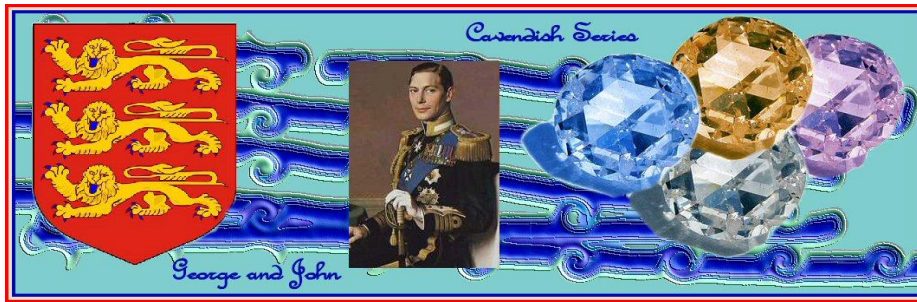
Norm There you go. That oughta do the trick.

Nerine *watches him* Nothing? You're not swooning?

Norm *shrugs* Nup. Not the swooning type. Your turn.

Nerine *excited* Hold my hand, then.





## ACT IV

### IV, Scene i: 1215, A Superbly Crafted Barge On The Thames

*This barge is a triumph of woodworking craftsmanship. It has a high area, where sit the king (in a grand scrollwork chair) and his five henchmen (except that of course, Roland must stand with a foot on the side of the barge). All of the men are dressed exquisitely, even Guy and Roland. The King is stunning: his clothes are not only fashioned expertly but are made of eastern silk and therefore brightly coloured.*

*Six oarsmen sit down in the depths of the bow, plying huge oars in a rhythmic, non-aggressive manner. Three musicians are in the very stern of the barge: a tambour, recorder and lute. They are dressed in a uniform of gold and red, with the streamers of the same colours floating back near where they stand.*

*Martin is focused on parchment scrolls to which he constantly refers; he gives the impression of being under pressure and thereby acutely disorganized and dysfunctional. That, as well as his pedantic manner, always annoy the King.*

*At the start of this scene: the musicians play happy, jolly tunes, which the king hums along to in an indifferent voice. We begin with the camera focusing closely on John's hands, which are covered in rich rings, some of which we have already seen amongst King George's artwork. And the barge was seen among Nerine's artwork. Neat, huh?*

*During the short voyage, there is a racy discussion of upcoming royal events. Why have this scene? Well, we need to place ourselves in the medieval framework of holy days, the moon cycle, the return of Clarin & Maggs, and just some incidental bits of history.*

John *serene*                    The Thames ... we do not know in all the world of a more perfect watercourse.

How long ago was the full moon?

Guy                                Eight days ago, wasn't it?

*Martin is distracted. He riffles through his parchments.*

Martin                            Er, yes. Full moon was ... yes, yes, it is ... eight days since.

John                                We seem to recall that a pleasurable doom awaits us 10 days clear of the last full moon.

Roland                            My liege asked Crome and Passley to prepare. Could vat be it, Majesty?

Simon                             And you have the return from Normandy of Sir Clarin Pelerine, my nephew, and his charming wife. With their retinue of servants. And no doubt other sundries.

Walter                             Surely Madame Pelerine can be persuaded to sing for you? With the royal princesses, who have promised Your Majesty a fairy entertainment.

Martin *fawning*                Perhaps she'll dance for us. I disremember a more lovely sight than little Maggs dancing.

John *frowns suddenly*        She's not in milk, is she? We aren't keen to see women jigging about if they are in milk ...

What else?

Roland                             The miracle play, Sire. The mummers of Glebe perform for Our Gracious King a salutary tale against the wickedness of adultery and vice.



Simon                                      Gentlemen. Which day is it that we go a-whoring, then?  
Thursday?

*Martin frantically refers to his parchments.*

Martin                                      Thursday ... is alright ... if ... no! The anglers of Bakewell come to  
the court to present a harvest dance.

Roland                                      How is Friday looking?

Martin *shaking head,*                      No: St Vera's feast day. Market at Helenvale and then --  
*apologetically*

John *annoyed*                              Oh, to Hell with the Veras. They can just sacrifice some of their  
virgins to us, that's all.

*[General mirth]*

So it's Friday that we make for Helenvale for some manly sport.  
And this time, **we** shall keep score. You got it all ballsed-up last  
time, Simmy.

Simon *surprised*                              I? How so?

*The conversation fades as the camera watches the barge move out of view.*

END OF SCENE

#### **IV, Scene ii:** 1215, A Field Near A Castle. The First Cricket Match

*A group of young men, shepherds and cowherds, dressed in simple attire, play a rudimentary game of cricket. It is a very warm summer day. King John sits nearby, in the shade of a huge tree, sitting on a carved wooden chair/throne. He is very interested in some scrolls of parchment and discusses the matters therein with Simon.*

*A mendicant friar is the umpire. A young man runs in and bowls. The thwack of ball on willow is heard. There is a catch, a shout, the umpire raises a finger and the young men stroll in to discuss the*

---

© October 2011 Property of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE



the blue knights. Banners aloft and shining armour, almost blinding those who observe our procession.

We, of course, will lead the triumphant throng through the gates. We'll be riding Paragon, wearing Dicky's favourite suit of armour. I think that will be utterly fitting. And mind, no neuters! The steeds must all be stallions or we'll cut off heads as well as balls.

Martin Geldings, King John.

John What's that, old boy?

Martin Neutered horses are called *geldings* by the common folk.

John Really? I must remember that.

*[Abruptly hands the scrolls back to Simon.]*

Yes, I want that plan carried forward, for the leading party. Then will follow the cardinals and bishops, but they'll just wear their usual kit: robes and so on. They will be all astride greys. I'm not worried about the gender of the church beasts. They're only permitted to be part of the pageant as a sign of our veneration for God, and not for any other reason.

I certainly hope that the church crowd don't imagine that I'm trying to curry favour with the Pope, because nothing could be farther from the truth. Impudent rogue!

Simon And after the bishops? Who do you foresee as following the churchmen, John?

John *vague wave of hand* Oh, everybody else ... The archers, squires, knaves and foot soldiers. Most of them will die in battle anyway. I don't care what they wear. No-one will spare them more than a second glance.

Martin *enthusiastic* And in this beauteous fashion you will take Jerusalem, my Liege, for the glory of Christ our Lord?

- John Yes. We leave on our pilgrimage as soon as Simmy readies up the participants.
- Roland And the barons?
- John *through clenched teeth* The barons who worry me to death with their scutages and their heiresses will **not** come to the Holy Land with us. They are not wanted there. They can stay here at home to sow their crops, fatten their kine and clip the fleeces. All of which we will tax to the hilt, thereby financing our journey. 'Tis only fair, is it not, Simmy?
- Simon What of their charter which they wish you to sign?
- John *airily* No matter. We shall sign their wretched Magna Carta but uphold not a word of it. Too simple!
- Martin *frowning, shakes head solemnly* This is a bitter business, King John. For humble men to frank a list of demands from their sovereign ruler; it is almost beyond belief. It beggars the senses, 'pon my word it does!
- John *nods* Too true, Reverend Martin. Too true. If these vassals only realised what has been our lot since that moment when Dickie breathed his last, they would sing high praises of us. Instead, they want to drag us from our steed to kick us into the mire.
- [Counting off his tribulations on his fingers]*
- Rivals to our throne, that vile French King annexing our continental territories, a Pope who prays constantly for our downfall, our own inclement health ...
- Aye, Martin, it comes to a pretty pass when our subjects tell us how our country shall be governed, when we have given our life to serve them.
- [Shouts at the players, who have begun their brawl]*
- Scurvy curs! Ungrateful dogs!

*[Watches the brawl]*

What is it that they do now?

Guy *pleased*

It's a brawl, Sire.

John *mutters, working himself into a passion*

We have burned ourself out like a candle to run this country in the most efficient manner, which has been a giant undertaking, given the parlous state the land was in when Dicky left it. What more can we do?

We have organised and planned: breeding swine, opening the forests, draining the marshes, allowing them to break up those huge rocks to make their cottages. What is that place called? Stonehenge!

Simon

You will be remembered as the very best of kings.

John *petulant*

We have sweated our lifeblood for the people.

*John strums his fingers on the ornate wooden chair as they all watch the brawl on the cricket pitch. He is somewhat distracted. Yet we can see from his jaw working that he is not happy. John turns to Roland.*

John *musings*

Oh, I don't know, Rollie. If they will indulge in these melees, then I'm sure that we shall all grow to love this game of wicket. Given time.

*[To Guy]*

You shall teach me to play, Sir Guy.

Guy *bowing*

Certainly, Your Majesty.

*King John looks about, seeing some men in chain mail, as if readying for battle. He stares towards them. Then the burst of anger comes. He bangs hard on the arm of the chair. His subsequent outburst causes everyone to freeze in fear.*

John *in frenzied passion*

To Hell with you bloody barons and your unreasonable demands.  
To Hell with you Devil-spawn!

For your wretched sake, we have cleared from these islands the lepers, the gypsies, the deformed and the mad. We – King John the First of England and France – we have strung-up the robbers and cut-throats, the laggards and sodomists, the slake-faced pirates who would sack and rape our land.

*[Standing, shouting and spitting, red-faced with wrath.]*

We are your King! When we lead our triumphant army into Jerusalem, to claim it back from the Muslims for Jesus Christ our Holy Lord, why then shall you all cry out praises for your beloved King John, the Lawgiver.

*[Angry tears, his voice now shaking with rage and despair.]*

And then you'll forget the expensive deeds of Richard *Coeur de Lion*, our belated brother. We'll be your Lion then! You won't wave your pathetic charters in front of our nose then, will you, when you are bending your knees to glory us?

*John is now berserk. With red tear-stained cheeks, teeth clenched, he dives for Roland's sword, then surges wildly into the cricket game, slashing angrily and indiscriminately at anyone in his way. This has the effect of speedily breaking-up the game, with all the players and spectators running for their lives. His five adherents rush to him, trying to calm him.*

END OF SCENE

#### **IV, Scene iii:** 1215, The Council Chamber (in Cartoon Format).

*The Pilgrimage plans take shape in John's mind in the form of a stylish, sumptuous cartoon. Drawings and sketches on parchment litter the table.*

*This is where John is inspecting the schematics for the leading party in the pilgrimage. At the far end of the room, there are monks nearby to chant. King John is only interested in minutiae: that the*

---

© October 2011 Property of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE

*uniforms are correct, that the caparisons of the horses are as he specified. Banners, colours, footwear all come under review.*

*The monks waft into their chant, which becomes a grand song as John's vision takes shape. Camera closes-in on John, as he stands looking as cherubic as possible.*

*We now meld into the Pilgrimage: It is in a "cartoon" form, based on the earlier drawings which Nerine showed to King George. John is now the mighty leader. Jerusalem is taken and Christianity is once again the only religion. The Saracen (Saladin) is vanquished. John rides triumphant through the streets of Jerusalem. Cheering crowds, palm fronds waved and so on. A young squire rides up and bows, followed by a white knight and a black knight.*

Cartoon squire *humble, bowing* All of France bends the knee to the great King John of England.

Cartoon white knight *humble, bowing* Normandy has revolted and is once again at the bosom of King John's demesne.

Cartoon black knight *humble, bowing* Glory to the noblest of kings. All hail to King John, the Holy Warrior.

*The glorious music soars. The cartoon John's noble steed rears up as the cartoon John lifts his shining sword on high, with shafts of sunlight from Heaven spotlight him. Then the cartoon finishes abruptly. So does the music, except that the monks continue to chant.*

*The late afternoon sun is setting, and divine golden shafts of sunlight stream into the room. John, looking bemused and overcome with emotion, turns towards the monks. Martin is costumed as a bishop; he stands with palms together, looking at the ceiling, whispering prayers. The others (Guy, Roland, Simon and Walter) are kneeling in prayer, openly weeping with their overwrought emotions. The monks' chanting segues into the next scene.*

SEQUE INTO THE NEXT SCENE

**IV, Scene iv:** 1215, In A Huge Room In An Old Castle.

*The same musicians who were playing on the barge strike up a melodious dance tune.*

*Our five friends stand pillar-like, acting as danseurs noble while John, Maggs and Clarin dance a stately pas de trois, moving gracefully as they thread their way among the five friends.*

*Maggs is more beautiful than ever in her gorgeous robes. Clarin is also exquisitely dressed. John is enchanted with his two favourites.*

*The Duc de Reebes, back to camera, moves into shot, almost blocking-out our view of the dance.*

END OF SCENE

**IV, Scene v:** 1215, King John's Private Chamber.

*The camera is positioned two feet above the floor beside John's bed.*

*King John is in hysterics, cowering on the floor, clutching the crown of Edward the Confessor to his chest, crying gustily. Guy and Walter lean towards the King, reaching forward, trying to coax the King to come out of his hiding place. The Duc de Reebes, richly gowned and wearing a coronet, stands to the back of the scene, watching the proceedings in a disgusted manner, has his hands on his hips.*

de Reebes *roundly*            And I say that you **will** harry the French! There is no help for it.  
                                          Stop play-acting that you are a frightened maid, Johnnie.

*This is met by a howling wail from the King. The Duc de Reebes storms off angrily, striding from the room.*

Walter *frustrated*            Come, come, my Liege! This is not fit for your august person to  
                                          hole-up in this manner.

Guy *appealing*                Sire, give me your crown and I'll place it safe on vat table over  
                                          vere.

John *wailing as if a*            I won't go to France! I won't let my fighting men go to France:

*petulant child*                    they must stay here to protect me. You must tell Reeby so!

                                          The barons are bullying me: they want me to sign a Great Charter and I'll need my men to protect me from them.

Guy                                    Give us your 'and, Sire. Let us seat you in a proper chair, so's vat we can 'ave a drink of wine, or summet.

*Walter pulls a face and stands. Meanwhile, John continues to sob and moan.*

*Walter disgusted*                The king has befouled himself. You'll have to clean him up.

*Walter turns on his heel and marches out.*

*Guy affronted*                    Aw, why do I always get ve shit work?

END OF SCENE

#### **IV, Scene vi:** 1215, Prelude To Magna Carta

*A beautiful green park beside the castle opens this scene. Spreading trees predominate. Around the edges of the park, wildflowers and decorative bushes can be seen. This is a lovely, bucolic scene. Near the walls, Lute and the Royal children play, joined by the dogs. Lute tumbles, does tricks, and the children are excited and happy. They are watched and minded by three stout women, dressed as nuns.*

*The Queen sits in comfort close by, surrounded by a bevy of waiting women. They chatter and sit at their ease. Some are stitching with tambour frames. In the midst of the women is Martin, just now holding out his hands to support a skein of wool, being helpful to one of the ladies. He is in his element.*

*Closer to the camera, Roland is dressed in his peasant gear, practising his archery with a marked board on a frame. To his right are four barons, with impressive facial hair, dressed in tunics and chain mail. To his left, working on a bench, is his fletcher, Robert. Guy stands at the bench, watching*

---

© October 2011 Property of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE

*Roland. His face is downcast and careworn. Robert is occupied with making and/or mending the arrows. And fetching same from the board at given intervals.*

*In this scene, conversations with Roland come in waves from the right (barons) and the left (Guy). Roland has to juggle both conversations as best he can. Obviously Guy's talk must not be heard by the barons, and so he must whisper hoarsely. As both conversations go forward, Roland continues to fire off arrows. The children's play is seen and heard as appropriate throughout.*

*Roland starts off by sounding weary of the argument on which our camera has intruded.*

Roland                    You are wasting your time asking me to discuss any of vese matters with ve king, gentlemen. 'E is least likely to listen to me giving guidance on ve governance of 'is country.

Baron #1                    It is **our** country, Husier. And it falls deeper into ruin with every gathering night.

Roland *forceful*            Living so close to 'Is Majesty, I can safely swear to you vat no man cares more for vis country and for its people van John Plantagenet.

Baron #2 *scathing*            For what he can leach out of it, mayhap. It has long since been time for John Lackland to take hold of the reins, yet he allows the common wealth to trickle between his finger joints.

Baron #3                    And where goes the gelt? Onto whose back? Into whose deep pockets?

*Roland, who has approached Robert and is busy with the arrows, is now addressed in a raspy whisper by Guy.*

Guy *whisper*                    If I am supposedly sent off on any more errands, I'll tie my ruby ring in your girdle cord. Vat way you'll know whenever I'm really on 'orse or I've been done in by Crownhead.

Roland *leaning forward, concerned*            What is vis?

Guy                            I'm for it, my friend. I can tell by ve way `e looks at me.

Roland *trying to reassure*

Are you still worried vat ve boss will kick you out? Or worse? Impossible!

'E likes to 'ave five of us around 'im. It is 'is 'appiest number. 'E won't get rid of any of us, you'll see. Remember what 'e always says: Five fingers and five toes.

Guy *not reassured*

More like four elegant fingers and a ugly fumb. Anyway, 'e's got vis Clarin bloke now. 'E's not only a great warrior, but 'e's book-learned as well. And 'Is Majesty seems to like 'im well enough ...

Roland

Never!

*Roland turns back to the nobles. He bows as he approaches the target.*

Roland *placating*

Gentlemen. I shall speak to ve King of your grave concerns. And I know vat 'e will counter vat King Richard bled ve coffers dry in 'is time, and vat is the legacy 'e's 'ad to contend with. Would vat 'e'd listen to me wiff boff ears!

Baron #2

And you, good knight, have hit on the very nub of the matter. With your influence you could easily steer His Majesty from this ruinous course of his; this dream of reconquering the Holy City. Tell him that he would more easily capture wispy sky clouds in a silk bag than win back Jerusalem for Christendom.

Baron #1

The work now is all in France, reclaiming our lost lands. The crown must concentrate all its efforts across the Channel, to bring back King Henry's French possessions which John's ineptitude and foolhardiness have lost.

Baron #3

In France, and in England; that's our future.

Tell King John to never mind the Holy Land. Enough gelt and English lives have been wasted there. It is at home, here in England where the king must rule as a true Christian ruler. Put an end to his hostility towards his people.

*[To Guy, loudly]*

All these **judicial murders**, as the king terms them, must stop!  
Put up your wicked blade, le Formur!

*Guy steps forward, in anger, and the barons also move forward. Robert the Fletcher stiffens, and Roland separates the combatants.*

*At this point, the nurses, children, waiting women and queen disperse inelegantly, fleeing quickly and with shrieks of concern. Martin is left "dangling", his hands still holding the skein of wool. He makes a deprecating expression towards Roland and Guy. The seven men glance in that direction, and all relax, grinning at Martin's discomfiture.*

Roland                      Gentlemen. We must conduct ourselves wiff decorum. Why, we've frightened off 'Er Majesty and all 'Er retinue.

Baron #3                     Mark this, Sir Roland Husier, friend of King John, and mark it well. Magna Carta only begins our efforts to bring His Majesty into line. We will have a king whose only care is the welfare of this country and the French possessions. Or we'll get us another king. 'Tis easily done.

Guy *very angry*             You filthy –  
  
*[He is stopped by Roland]*

Baron #1                     We all applaud your work with the poor, Husier. You have shown yourself to be virtuous, chivalrous and a credit to the court.

Baron #2                     Persuade your royal friend, then, with all the persuasive power you possess to uphold the tenor of our charter. His future as well as ours may well depend on that ...

END OF SCENE

#### **IV, Scene vii:** 1215, The Castle's Armoury Room.

*This is a well-managed armoury room, filled with armour and every imaginable kind of medieval weapon. A blacksmith works nearby, and we can just hear him and his co-workers speaking Old English and occasionally banging/hammering as would a smith. A high window beams shafts of brilliant sunlight into the room. The King is dressed for battle and wanders about as he speaks, Guy in his wake. Both the King and Guy touch the armoury and feel the balance of swords and so on.. Then, at the sticking point, they face each other. Symbolically, this is the end for Sir Guy, for John will indeed have him killed.*

*Throughout this scene, John is either thunder-struck at Guy's words, or appalled. He goes by turn from anger to boyish cajoling. This is when John is at his most dangerous.*

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| John <i>chatty</i>   | Did we spy you and Rollo cavorting with our sworn enemies this morning?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Guy <i>shrugs</i>    | They came upon us at our archery practice, My Liege. We did our best to shoo vem orf, we did.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| John                 | If only we could be rid of our enemies, eh? So, we have another grim task for you, Sir Guy. Do you still have the stomach for it, or do you now sympathise with these barons? Well, well ...<br><br>You are to cut into the live body of Lord Bosworth, dragging out his guts and stringing him up by them. If you can manage it, the longer he remains alive, the better. When he finally succumbs, pike his head and feed his innards to the Devil Hounds. Can you do that to our satisfaction, do you think? |
| Guy <i>shrugs</i>    | 'Ave I ever failed you before?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| John <i>decisive</i> | Yes. You most certainly have failed us. Time and time again, as it happens. We are more than disappointed in you, Sir Guy. Our friends tell us that you are now dissatisfied with our court and wish to retire from it.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Guy <i>sighs</i>     | I only said in passing vat I dream of owning a little farm, wiff a                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

fat wife and casks of good French wine to enjoy. In me old age, o' course.

John *airily* You must earn your retirement, then. Kill my Lord Bosworth as described and that will test your love for me.

Guy *[A speaking silence. Guy's face works.]*

I don't ever 'ave to prove vat, Sire, for I killed a King for you.

*This bald pronouncement by Guy has the effect of a direct attack on the King and is utterly unexpected. John stops, then wheels about to face Guy.*

John *horrified at this effrontery* What?

Guy A king. I murdered a rightful king for your sake.

John *appalled* What the devil are you talking about?

Guy Your bruvver Geoffrey's little boy Prince Arthur, Sir. Your nevvv. You 'ad me murder vat boy. 'E blubbered and wept, Sire. I won't never forget ve look on 'is little face 'til ve day I dies! It broke my 'eart, it did, to 'ave to cut out 'is eyes and 'is balls. Fank Gawd 'e died of ve shock.

John *still appalled* But ... but he had made a hostage of my mother! His own grandmother! You know that.

Guy *stolid* Yes, my liege, I know 'e did.

John *imploring him to understand* Richard appointed me, his brother, to be King on his death. Not that boy. **Me!** With my wealth of experience at war and at governance. God spoke to me and He told me to govern England.

Guy *reasonably* Beggin' your pardon, sire, but Arthur was ve next in succession. 'E was ve next king. 'Im bein' young, you could 'ave regented for 'im. Until 'e come of age.

John Oh, yes. And what would have happened **then**, pray tell, when

he had married and had had issue? What was to happen then, eh, as poor old Uncle Johnny got pushed farther and farther down the line?

Bad Prince John, never to be king. Where the hell have your wits gone, Sir Guy? I had no bloody choice in the matter. I obeyed God's command and my brother's wishes.

*Guy argumentative*

I find it 'ard to believe, Sire, vat God would tell anyone to mutilate an innocent child.

If you 'ad but seen 'is eyes. If you'd 'eard 'is little teary voice.

*[Wipes away tears.]*

*John utterly amazed*

I learned to be a great king whilst my Will o' the Wisp brother cavorted in the Holy Land. This is my calling, to be the greatest King of England. Why all of a sudden are you feeling queasy about it? You, who've never so much as shuddered with trepidation in your whole life?

*Guy*

I've served you wiffout a whimper, Your Majesty. I've done ve foulest things for you, I 'ave, and never said "Boo". But vat don't mean I ain't felt revolted and sad for what I done.

*Thunder-struck, John stares at Guy; then he seems suspicious and plotting. John walks about, thinking and humming. He stops and rounds on Guy.*

*John smarmy*

You denied me once, I recall. But I magnanimously forgave you for that, for I understood the nature of your concern. Indeed I did.

*Guy challenging*

Vat was for Mary. 'Ow could I ever kill ve beloved of my friend? You couldn't never ask it of me.

*John is suddenly imperious.*

*John authoritative*

Get down on your knees!

*Guy drops to a kneeling position. John looks angrily at him, then shrugs and drops to his knees beside Sir Guy, with an arm around him.*

John *cajoling* Together, we'll pray for God's forgiveness, shall we? For the many heinous crimes we have been **forced** to undertake in our Lord's service.

*[They pray.]*

John *his voice is sonorous and elegant* Forgive us, Oh Lord, for having stepped too far into the stream, and thereby wetting our boots. Forgive your mean and humble servant, Sir Guy le Formur, and his majestic master, Jean d'Anjou, for traipsing too heavily over the delicate fabric of Our Gracious God's work. And ... oh, et cetera, et cetera and Amen.

*[Both men rise]*

I know what will cheer you up – tuck, tuck, tuck.

*[John pats Guy's stomach]*

END OF SCENE

#### **IV, Scene viii:** 1215, Crome And Passley

*We are in a huge room wherein a large crowd of well-to-do English people sit around long trestle tables, hugely enjoying the capers of Lute, Wilfred and Passley. These three are dressed as children in nappies and baby bonnets as they play in a pile of sand, building sandcastles. At the start of the scene, the "children" sing a silly ditty, in childish voices. Some of the noble patrons have resorted to standing on the benches in order to get an optimum view of the proceedings.*

*As before, the Royal party (but not Sir Guy) sit high on a dais, along one side of a long table which groans under the weight of the silverware, food and wine thereon. The King and his henchmen enjoy the comedy every bit as much as the crowd do.*

*Then, Crome, dressed as Dame Pantalot, skips into the room. There is a riotous roar of welcome, with a long bout of sincere applause. Crome pretends to flirt with the King's guards, who cannot help but blush and giggle as Crome fondles their private parts, cooing and gasping to the crowd's immense enjoyment.*

Dame Pantalot *to "the children"* Ooooh! Sandcastles!

There n'ain't no such a hoccupation for little dears in the summer than running about on the beach, making sandcastles, is there, my fine Cherubs?

*[Pointedly, to the crowd]*

For Heaven knows, there n'ain't no money in the coffers for the herection of **real** castles.

*An "oooh!" rises from the crowd in agreement.*

Wilifred *in childish treble* But that's just what we been doin', Ma.

His Royal Highness, PuttyBotty has no money, so that man there ...

*[They all point to Walter]*

... has ordered us to find some in this 'ere beach.

Passley *with horrible falsetto* We're looking for pretty bits of rock and shells which might form the new English currency. Well, it was alright for old King Caligula and old King Claudius to transact in conches and whelks, wasn't it?

Lute *squeaky falsetto* The odd barnacle or limpet, eh?

*The four actors lift and display a selection of large shells, then begin to squabble and fight in the pile of sand, with Dame Pantalot/Crome lying on his back, kicking his legs about. The crowd weep with laughter.*

🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀 Break 🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀

*Angrily, King John leaves the performance, sweeping out of the room with howls of laughter and a volley of bread rolls following him.*

John *savage*                   Where is Sir Guy? Where is le Formur? Is the entertainment offered in our court not of a fit standard for such a jolly fellow as The Honourable Sir Guy? Is the diction of the actors not correct enough for this gentleman with his so well-modulated tones?

Martin *flummoxed*           Sire, Sir Guy has gone ahead to The Wash, as you ordered.

*John flounces down the corridor, in a pet, with Martin trotting along in his wake.*

END OF SCENE

#### **IV, Scene ix:** 1215, Fossil Hunting Near The Seashore

*Roland sits alone, on a large rock, overseeing the jolly party on the beach. He strokes the knots tied in the cord of his girdle meditatively.*

*The camera closes-in on Martin, who is trying to organize the fossil-hunt. The other men (Clarín, John, Guy, Simon and Walter) hold small picks. They fossick about in the shale beds fronting onto the beach.*

*There are three piles of debris: fossilized dinosaur bones, which now would be beyond price, rocks and stones, and neatly piled plates of shale. Martin busily points these out to anyone who might be listening.*

Martin                         ... and so here are the dragon bones, which must be ground down into brick dust by a sorcerer or magician. For our safety, of course.

And these ... these are of no account. Just beach rubble, you know.

---

© October 2011 Property of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE

But this pile here represents the King's booty. Any pieces of shale which bear pretty ferns or leaves, or feathers; this is what we most treasure. This is what we seek in our little expedition.

*Maggs stands under a canopy which is borne by four guards. Clarin, always near her, uses his pick in a desultory manner, stopping to chat and laugh with John. We do not hear their conversation.*

*However, we see John hold out a very lovely fern-fossil, which is admired by his two young friends.*

*Simon and Walter have drawn a little away. Walter stares up to the rock where Roland sits in solitude.*

Simon                      We'd better look busy, old chap.

Walter                     Why in the name of thunder do we mess about here on the beach when we should be raising much-needed funds in order to keep this realm above water.

Simon                     Softly, softly, my friend! For even though the coffers seem empty, the Plantagenet jewels are worth any amount, and might be sold off at need.

Walter                     And after that?

Simon *sarcastic*         Fo! Why, we take France and then life is truly a bed of roses.

*Walter shakes his head. Then Simon and Walter make a show of using their picks. Walter looks up to where Roland was sitting. However, Roland has gone.*

END OF SCENE

**IV, Scene x:** 1215, The King's Bedchamber At King's Lynn

*The dogs loll near the fire. Martin stands patiently. John strolls into the room from his dressing area, dressed in nightgown and robe. A male servant scuttles quickly out of the room. The King's mood is now urbane and charming.*

John *elegantly*                      Dear Martin. So you are my tucker-inner this evening, hmmm?  
*fingering his*  
*sleeve/cuff*

Martin *bows, happy*              Sire.

John                                      And I trust that you enjoyed our little entertainment some nights since?

Martin                                  Crome and Passley? Oh, indeed, my liege, they were on their best form. No doubt about it.

*John touches the trinkets and decorations which surround him as he struts about the room. Martin and the dogs watch him.*

John                                      They never miss a beat, do they? Crome and Passley ...  
  
Incisive wit and raw humour. Do you know, dearest Martin, that I can't remember ever having been disappointed in their performance. HmMMM ... Never disappointed ...

*[Decisive, very pleased with himself.]*

Send for the young man, Pelerine. He's wandering about the place somewhere, I trust.

Martin *uncertain*                      Are you sure, Your Majesty? I mean ... I haven't seen him --

John                                      Yes, he's here. You saw him on the beach today. I sent for him earlier, after that wretched cock-up with the carts. He comes at my command.

*[Stops as if remembering something]*

We may even get him to sort out Guy's mess at The Wash, now

that I think of it. One never knows.

*[Resumes his strutting, imperious]*

Go and fetch him, please, Martin.

Martin *bowing*                      Certainly, sire.

*Martin bows out of the room. John fiddles with things for a couple of moments, and then the door opens. Martin re-enters the room with the sketchiest of bows, followed by Clarin, who does not bow. Clarin's expression is serious; he is obviously displeased to have been summoned to his majesty.*

John *welcoming*                      Ah! My dear boy. How fit and well you look. Clearly, warfare has suited you admirably. And marriage!

Clarin *kissing the proffered royal hand*                      Always your loyal servant, your majesty.

John *looks him over thoughtfully*                      Yes ... yes ...

Martin *uncertain*                      Er ... Shall I leave, Sire, or ... ?

John *snaps out of his reverie*                      Oh, no, by all means stay, dear chap. In fact, I **insist** that you stay. We're all going to need a witness.

*With this, Clarin looks suspicious, and Martin more confused than ever.*

Martin *confused*                      Um ... witness, Sire? Witness? Wh-what? ...

*John abruptly ceases his nervous pacing about and boldly faces the other two men, hands on hips.*

John *firmly*                      I have long suspected and am now certain that Sir Guy le Formur is no longer loyal to my person. He is a traitor and so must die a traitor's death.

*[Martin gasps audibly; Clarin stoically shows no emotion.]*

Yes, you are shocked at my pronouncement, Sir Martin. I'm hardly surprised, for Sir Guy has hidden his treachery well.

Sir Clarin Pelerine! Look here at this perfect sword: a tribute to the smith's art. This may be the very best sword in Christendom.

'Tis one of the many weapons bequeathed to me by my illustrious brother, King Richard.

Now, young Sir Knight ... take it up and feel it's weight.

*Clarin's eyes light-up at the sight of the beautifully-crafted weapon. Lovingly, he removes it from the scabbard. Clarin turns his wrist about, in the manner of a swordsman, to feel the weight of the sword. He is obviously impressed.*

John *eager*                      What think you of it? Is it not perfection?

*Clarin cannot tear his gaze from the weapon, which he flourishes, taking in the glint of candlelight on steel.*

Clarin *marvelling*              Indeed, Sire. The very prince of swords. Did you give it a name yet?

John                                Oh, I call it "Galahad", as did my brother.

*John grabs Clarin's sleeve impulsively, as Clarin looks down into the King's eyes. Clarin's eyes are hard and cold. The king's eyes are feverish.*

John *speaking very quickly*              In a moment, I'll have Sir Guy come to this room on some pretext or other. I want you to take this sword and kill him with it. Don't ... don't make it a slaughter. I owe him that much at least. Make it swift and clean. Can you do that?

Clarin                                Of course.

Martin *overcome with emotion*              Oh, no, Sire! Not Sir Guy. I mean ... well, I know that he --

John *angry, turns on Martin*                      Silence, jackass!

Martin *weeping*                      Let God be the One to punish all who stray from the path of righteousness. Let His mercy --

John *shouting*                      Silence, I said! I will not have men about me whom I cannot trust. I won't risk the stability of the kingdom by laying myself

open to such a danger. He is constantly plotting against me, and he will drag Roland and Walter down with him. I won't have it.

*[Turns wildly on Clarin]*

Will you do it? You won't muck it up?

Clarin *unflinching* I shall run him through clean and quick, don't doubt it, King John.

John *settles down* Good. Good. Then hide yourself behind the dressing screen. You can pounce out at him when he least expects it.

*[To Martin]*

And you stop your blubbering. We want him to be off-guard. If he sees your cold mutton face, he'll become suspicious.

*John marches to the door and calls out for some unseen servant to fetch Sir Guy to him immediately.*

*At the same time that John leaves the room, Martin turns to Clarin.*

Martin *whispers* How can you do this? The man never did you any harm.

Clarin *stern, steadfast from behind the curtain* I shall have no compunction in killing this murderous knight, Reverend. He is no saint.

Martin *trying valiantly to compose himself* He only did as he was told to do; as we **all** have had to do. Even you!

John *returning to the chamber* Right! He is even now on his way. Everyone in position, please.

*King John is enjoying this now. John and Martin posture themselves as if they are in a play.*

Guy *enters with a low bow* Your Majesty. I understand vat you `ave need of my services?

John *enchanted* Yes, I do, gallant Sir Guy. I have a commission for you. A little something I would like you to do. Come over here, will you?

*John moves toward the curtain, followed by Guy, who glances at the empty scabbard on the table and suddenly stops, frowning.*

The Execution of Sir Guy Le Formur.

*Swiftly, without seeming effort, Clarin steps forward from behind the curtain and kills Guy by plunging the sword strongly into his chest. Guy drops to his knees, gasping. Touching the blood and looking totally surprised, he looks directly up into John's eyes.*

*Clarin (without even a hint of emotion) draws out the sword. Globes of blood drop from it.*

*Guy slumps forward, dead. John freezes in disbelief. Martin sobs and tries to make himself go to the fallen knight, but can't do more than hopelessly reach towards him, sobbing pathetically.*

*Clarin is utterly calm, as he hands the bloody sword back to John.*

Clarin *without emotion* There you are, Sire. He couldn't have asked for a cleaner death.

*King John gingerly takes the sword, which he immediately hands to Martin, who is devastated.*

John *nervous and*

*aghast at what he has achieved*

Oh! Yes ... well, that's what we do with traitors.

*[Convincing himself.]*

We take harsh, swift vengeance on our enemies, both within the camp and without, eh young man?

Now, the body. How will we dispose of these guts without causing untoward talk in the household?

Clarin *unemotional*

Leave it to me, King John. I'll wrap the carcass in some sheets and lug it outside. I'll clean up the blood while I'm at it.

John

Excellent! And no-one the wiser. Good! We'll just put out a tale that we sent him on some mission or other, but that he was murdered by scoundrels. I'll put out a search party for them. Or, no! We won't even have to say that. Say he just rode off on my orders, but never returned, and we don't know what happened to him.



in the woods. And, at the earliest opportunity, I will go to the grave and say a few words of prayer and farewell. His soul can fly to Heaven, and the thing is done.

*Martin has run out of words, and so shrugs his shoulders. He looks strangely at his King, as if really seeing him for what he is for the first time. John goes to Martin: tender, compassionate, with a hand gently placed on Martin's shoulder.*

John *kindly* Ah, Martin! I cannot say, cannot convey my thanks in the most appropriate words: to thank you for your aid in this dreadful business. We must be vigilant, always vigilant against deceit and treachery near our person. Even in those we had trusted for such a long time. The Devil is ever our enemy, and we must forever be on guard.

Martin Sire, I honestly do not believe that Guy was anything but your most devoted servant.

John Well, he wasn't. Anyway, that is all. We won't mention him again.

*[Turns to Clarin, who has also been patting the dogs.]*

And now, young fellow. As for you, who tosses away silk sheets at the merest whim ...

I am now to reward you for your services, am I not?

Clarin No reward is necessary, Your Majesty. My King commands, and I do his bidding.

John Ah, no. You must be suitably rewarded. Not just for your signal service of this night, but for your unremitting devotion; to me through de Reebes, who as you know was my dearest, dearest friend. My loved Reeby. My loved Pelerine. And what do you think I will give to you?

Clarin *without hesitation* You will no doubt present me with the sword, Galahad.

John *with a patronising slight nod and coy smile* Take it, then.

*Clarín picks up the sword and wipes the blood off on the hem of his already dirty top. Then he places the sword in the scabbard, putting it to one side, within reach.*

John *smiling* I suppose we can only be too happy that you didn't wipe that gore off on the clean sheets!

*[Gestures to the casket]*

And here. All these little trinkets are yours as well.

*Clarín opens the heavy clasp and opens the lid. Music: low, throbbing, dramatic. The candlelight plays magic with the Plantagenet jewels.*

Martin *aghast and gasps audibly* The treasure of the Plantagenets. ... Oh, my liege, I must protest! You can't just give them away like this.

John *affronted* And why on earth not? They're ours! We'll dispose of them as we see fit.

Martin *pleading* Sire, your Royal purse is empty. There is no money left to run the kingdom. Why, Walter is almost tearing his hair out trying to raise the funds to pay for our intended set-to with France. Pardon me for my frankness, Sire, but you'll certainly need those family jewels to pawn against a loan ... perhaps *several* loans ... to keep this poor, unhappy country afloat.

John Don't worry about that, dear chap. I'll simply raise the taxes and demand more gelt from my lovely subjects.

Clarín I'll not take them, then, if it means that the Saxons will suffer.

John *somewhat surprised* Well put! But you needn't worry. Sir Martin and Sir Walter don't know anything about my treasure. They think they do, but I have plenty of funds tucked away.

No: you take these. Some day you'll find that they are worth ...

what is it called? A king's ransom!

*[Delighted, puts the casket into Clarin's hands.]*

Martin King John ... my Liege. You are signing this man's death warrant if you pursue this course!

John What?

Martin Your intimates will guess. Surely they will guess. The jewels will be missed and they will surmise that you capriciously handed them over to your latest favourite.

You know Roland and Simon. And Walter, even more. They will go after this man wherever he travels on God's earth. They'll hunt him down, kill him, simply on account of these Plantagenet jewels.

John They won't do that.

Martin Pardon, my Liege, but they will, as sure as check. Cunning and ruthless, they are.

Think, John. One of us is always with you. You have one of us to tuck you in *every night*, in turn. Do not imagine that we do not scan your chamber to make certain that all is in place. These jewels will be the first thing missed.

John *confused* Then, how ...

Clarin *gathering sword and casket to his chest* We can bring in a tale that they went down in one of the wagons which perished in The Wash these many days.

John *absolute brainwave* My God! Yes, of course! That's just what I wanted you to do, dear Clarin. I've only just recalled it ... I wanted you to tidy up that bloody mess at The Wash. I didn't want you to kill Sir Guy after all. That was merely an afterthought. Not that his being dead isn't a great boon to us all. Never having to listen to that ghastly accent of his must be called a blessing from On-High.

No! You shall undertake our commission to rescue as many of those drowned wagons as possible. You'll ride there at first light. And you'll be urgent that the jewels **must** be found because His Majesty is in the megrims over them.

Perfect! A perfect, wonderful plan!

Clarín And when they aren't found in the wagons, I'll send out armed men to scour the countryside for the supposed thieves. No one will be above suspicion and so forth. We'll get the locals into the water, fishing about for the most exquisite treasure in Christendom. It can't miss.

John *overwhelmed  
with admiration* Brilliant!

Clarín I'll take the first chance I get to put this casket (empty and swinging open) into the sand, by the drowned wagons. That will surely confirm to all that the jewels **were** there but are now gone.

John That is inspired, so it is! Go, go, then! You've to bury that Guy-person, and hie over to The Wash. Martin you'll stay with me as per the original plan. And you'll mention to anyone that you bump into how inconsolable I am about the loss of the royal jewels, and so on and so forth.

Gentlemen! We are consumed with pleasure at this turn of events. Take your leave of us. Quick, quick.

*Clarín bows and then marches briskly from the room, with the sword and swag of jewels.*

END OF SCENE

**IV, Scene ix: 1215, At The Wash**

*This is a rainy, miserable day. Our scene begins under a sketchily-built shelter.*

*Pan the scene. There are piles of lumber on the beach and in the shallow water. Soldiers and common folk wander about on the sand and in the water. It is a very disorganised search. A horseman trots up, and dismounts with some difficulty. It is Martin. He scrambles under the shelter, where Clarin stands, brooding.*

Clarin *distracted, to himself* Elmer's dagger ... What can I have done with it? Not lost at sea ... ?

*Clarin tries to recall, and then he turns his face towards Martin, who has been watching him.*

Martin Good morrow. How goes the quest to find the jewels?

Clarin Sir Martin, we are alone. You can speak your mind without pretence.

Martin His Majesty sent me here to ensure that our little scheme goes smoothly.

Clarin Tell him that we muddle along at a steady, but uneventful pace.

Martin Do you have any other message for your King?

Clarin *off-hand* No. That's it.

*Pause. Martin is not sure how to proceed. Martin catches Clarin's sleeve.*

Martin *takes big breath* Sir Clarin! I must speak with you. I must tell you that I dislike that look of disdain which crosses over your face whenever you gaze upon His Majesty. Or when you speak of him.

He calls you a surly fellow, but it goes beyond that, I think. I must tell you that I and all of the King's companions have sworn a pledge to protect his life at all cost. Even at the risk of our own bodies and properties.

Clarin *grins* And so you think that I harbour thoughts of assassination?

*[Serious again]*

No, not so. Rest assured that it is not so, Reverend.

There is no need for anyone to end His Majesty's miserable life. Our Lord God is taking good care of that without human intervention.

Martin *intent*

Why, what do you mean?

Clarín

Are you not his Doctor of Physick as well as his holy man? Have you not already diagnosed the canker which eats our King from the inside out?

Martin *claps his hand over his mouth*

A canker?

Clarín *nods*

I've seen it before. The breath is the tell-tale sign. Faugh! And his bloated stomach and yellow eyes should have given you pause, Sir Martin.

No, King John's gluttony feeds a greedy canker which hides in his belly, and it will surely kill him. So, you see, there is not the slightest need for me or for any mortal man to act against him.

By this time next autumn, if not before, we shall be kneeling to King Henry, the boy-king.

Martin *appalled*

No! It cannot be!

Clarín

Listen! You are a good man, despite your many years with that Plantagenet butcher. Do not waste any more time on him, but stick to the Queen and her princely son. That is where your future should lie. Remain with her at all times, and when the end is near, ensure her safety, and that of the boy. Get them to London under guard so that he can secure the throne. The lad likes you, I believe, and that must stand you in excellent stead.

Martin

And you?

- Clarín You'll be my sponsor in that direction, I trust. I appreciate that you must still despise me for killing your friend. But know you that once the King dies, they will all be my enemies, and mayhap even *your* enemies. It will be as dogs tearing into each other for one tasty bone ... and *that* being the throne of England.
- Martin *thoughtful and resigned* Well, then, if that is so, I must make my plans. And you will send me word if you need my aid?
- Clarín Surely. I take my leave in a few weeks for France, just as the king commanded. My wife may or may not go with me. She is with child, you see, and none too well.
- Martin Yes! Little Maggs! What a delightful girl. She made the court beam with sunshine when she graced us with her presence. A happy event indeed.
- Clarín *gripping Martin's hand* Of course. Oh, and don't concern yourself with the jewels. I take them with me to France, to conceal them there. When the time is right, I'll bring them back to England. And that will be a great day indeed.
- Martin The jewels. But I thought --
- Clarín They belong to England, to the people of England. They are not for any one man to covet. I swear that they will be safely stowed away for our ally, the Queen of England.
- Goodbye, Sir Martin. I shall from now on keep my distance from King John's court. It is no longer safe there for me. And you would be best advised to be with the King as little as possible, too.
- Martin Yes, I see. You are very right to mistrust him, you know. He is all too likely to change his mind and want those baubles returned to him.



... and we are in the very depths of pain.

Where is Rolly-Rollo? Where has he gone?

Walter He may have followed after Guy, wherever **he's** vanished to.

John *contemptuous* He hasn't followed Guy at all.

Simon We aren't to know if he has or not, surely?

John *with finality* Le Formur is dead. He's nothing but rotting guts in the sod, now.  
But Rollo is very much alive; so where the Hell is he!?

Walter *shocked* What do you mean that Guy is dead? You yourself put it about  
that he was attending to the stranded wagons at --

John *banging his fist on arm of chair* I tell you that Guy is **dead**. Dead, dead, dead! He proved to be  
nothing more than a stinking turd mopper-upper.

*[More grimacing in pain. Gasps in agony.]*

Slaughtered at my command by one of my faithful knights.

*There is a stunned silence, broken by a vibrant roar of agony from the King.*

*Simon rushes forward, grabbing John cruelly by the upper arm, in spite of the King's obvious illness.*

Simon *angry* Which knight?

John *savagely, through clenched teeth* **Unhand your King, le Maistre!**

*Both men glare at each other, until at last, Simon unhands John. He steps back.*

Simon *bows* I'm sorry, Johnnie. My love for Sir Guy overcame my senses.

John *hugely sarcastic* Your - love - for - Guy ... ?

*[Shrugs]*

It is forgot. You are forgiven.

*Simon walks over to the fire, and John resumes his anguish. Walter does not move, but his jaw works ominously.*

Walter No, it cannot be forgot. This is not some chance-met fellow who might or might not touch your life. This is Guy, who swore to give his soul up for you, if that were required. And likewise, we owed to Guy our complete allegiance.

John *stung* What cared you for le Formur? He was no more than a tough dog's-body at the best of times. He had no more refinement than a nose-picking peasant.

Walter Yes, I agree. He was boorish and ungentlemanly: but he was your sworn defender, as you were his sworn protector. That truth is ineluctable.

*[Accusing]*

Stay! It was that newcomer, Pelerine, wasn't it? I said at the time that it was a mistake to bring him into our circle, and here's the proof of it.

John *angry* You're not to touch him! I told you that he acted upon my orders.

Walter Why? Why did you order our Guy's death? What had he done? And where is Lambden? Does he know of Guy's passing? Was he in on this?

*Trying to escape this inquisition, with hands over his ears, John slides off the chair onto his knees. Weeping wildly, he grips the chair whilst in the throes of intestinal agony. Walter still has not moved. He looks as if he is ready to strike. Simon steps forward, watching Walter as if staring at a wild dog, fearful of its next action.*

John *wailing* Aghhhh! I am so ill ...  
Find Martin ... he'll be with the Queen and the boy. Oh, find him, that I may get some relief, and make my peace with my Lord.

*John adopts a praying pose, possibly thinking that this will spare him from further questioning. His hands are raised high in prayer. John begins to wail prayers in Latin as he sobs, but not so loud that it is annoying for us (the audience).*

*When Simon and Walter next speak, it is in different voices, ones which we have not yet heard. It is as if they have become different persons. This pair of evil men have up until now hidden their darker sides; now, we see their true selves.*

*Simon head to the side, intrigued*      Your Majesty, why did you order Guy's death? You know that we (all five of us) undertook an oath in blood to protect our King, and to protect each other. If you have overturned those oaths, then that would be the foulest crime ever committed before the sight of God and no punishment could ever be great enough.

*Walter shouting to be heard over the wailing and the praying*      Forget your belly and attend me, oh my King.  
For here's the thing, John. You had it all sewn up right and tight while we five were at your side, sworn to protect you and each other: sworn in blood.

Mayhap, who can you trust now that you've betrayed one of us?

*John sobbing*      God help me!

*Simon*      For sure, Rollo has finally come to realize what everyone else knows; that you murdered his Mary.

Which one of us acted there on your behest, John? Who served the fatal potion to that virgin? It wasn't Walter nor I, and Guy stated a hundred times that he was innocent of that demise. So that only leaves Martin of Lambden ...

*John sobbing*      Have mercy on my soul, Oh Lord!

*Walter*      Sir Roland is probably even now plunging his sword deep into Sir Martin's fat stomach. That's another of your entourage slain to avenge your concupiscence.

How does it feel, John, to see those who loved and served you falling to the earth?

END OF SCENE

---

© October 2011 Property of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE

**IV, Scene xii:** 1215, King John's Cumbersome Coach

*A burst of grand, over-powering music floods the senses. This "shocks" us, following the brutal argument in the previous scene.*

*In his huge and cumbersome coach, John is driven to Newark Abbey. Simon and Walter are composed, stern, silent. King John is overcome with grief and grips his stomach in genuine pain. The King lays back on banks of cushions, facing forward, with his two companions opposite him. John emerges momentarily from his pain and grief, as the music winds down into background mode.*

John *weakly*                      This is all too cosy, no?

And now there are only the three of us, as was the case in our boyhood. Indeed, we shared my wet-nurse, Walter, you and I. Pap from the same tit. No men who are not brothers in blood could be closer.

*Walter and Simon ignore His Majesty. John sniffs, and his lip quivers. With tear-stained face, the King tries to engage the men in conversation.*

John                              One of you will have to taste the food before I do, you know.  
Roland would have leapt into action in this regard ...  
Oh, where can my Rollipop be? Where has he fled to?

*Still, the King is ignored. Sad and demoralized, John sinks in despair back into his cushions.*

END OF SCENE

**IV, Scene xiii:** 1215, Newark Abbey At King's Lynn

*We now move quickly to the interior of Newark Abbey. Instead of music, the beautiful singing of the monks will form an audio backdrop.*

*A bank of bowing monks, beaming with pleasure, flank the entrance to the abbey. There are lots of flambeaux and candles. The head of the monastery lunges forward and can't be obsequious enough.*

---

© October 2011 Property of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE

*However, John must struggle along without aid, as Simon and Walter do not approach to offer their arms as in former days; square-shouldered, they stride solemnly along, some three paces behind the King.*

Head                                    Welcome, welcome, oh Gracious King John to Newark Abbey.

My brothers and I humbly beg that you will partake of our little feast. Everything from our own grounds.

We beg you to enter and feast with your most faithful and loving servants.

*The monks have set out an imposing oak table with beautiful gold goblets and platters. An abundance of food, wine in ewers, candles. They realise that the King is unwell, so their rubicund faces change to express disappointed concern and sympathy. John approaches, groaning and gripping his stomach, with Simon and Walter sauntering along behind him. They all pause at the table, where John is again doubled over with pain. Groaning and looking terrible, he can hardly walk. After some hesitation, two of the monks step forward to support His Majesty.*

*Now unsure how to proceed, the Head vaguely gestures towards the feast. Walter and Simon refuse to offer any gesture of assistance.*

Head *hesitating*                    Would His Majesty care for some dinner?

John *manages to whisper*                            Can't possibly eat anything.

Walter *ignoring his King*                    This looks charmingly, Friar Benedict. What delights have we here?

Head *keen*                                    Roast goose with gooseberry and wine sauce, baked tubers and stewed fruits. And these many cheeses with sweet nuts. We breed the geese ourselves, my honoured Sir. All the fruits came from the orchards of the Abbey, and the vegetables from our kitchen garden.

Simon                                    Roast goose?

*[Nodding to Walter who reciprocates]*

Surely His Majesty's favourite repast.

John *whispers weakly* Roast goose, you say? And the sauce is ...?

Walter *inveigling* Mmmmmm, 'tis gooseberry and wine. What a pity that you should be too unwell to enjoy it, my King.

*There is a pregnant pause. Waving away his attendants, and managing to drag himself around the table, John appears to have had a change of heart.*

John No, no ... we shall ... just a *soupçon*. A taste. Tuck, tuck ...  
And then straight to bed. We are in great pain and need days of sleep ...

*King John is helped into a large wooden chair, made comfortable with cushions. Grasping his stomach in searing pain, he tries to swallow the merest morsel of food.*

*Into the void, John farts long and horribly, with expressive facial grimaces. Everyone nearly faints from the foul odour. The enchanting choral singing of the monks grinds relentlessly to a halt.*

*The King relaxes and smiles. He starts to eat in earnest, and drinks wine, without recourse to food-tasters. The monks smile at each other, delighted at this welcome turn of events.*

*John signals to the monks that he is enjoying himself. All are quiet. No sound can be heard except for the King slurping and chewing noisily and farting consistently.*

*All the faces become appalled. John gorges the food rapaciously now.*

*Suddenly, mid-mouthful, John stops and looks horrified. He moans, with a mouthful of food which falls unheeded to the table.*

*He staggers to his feet, gripping his stomach. Then the King screams in pain, lurching towards the camera and collapsing onto it.*

*Music thunders forth and into the next scene, which celebrates his death. The music is huge, glorious and racing.*

END OF SCENE

**IV, Scene xiv:** 1215 General Delight At The News Of The King's Death

*Thus follows a very quick round-up of King John's death:*

*From home to home, a rider delivers the news. People dance and shout with happiness. "The king is dead. Ha –ha! King John is dead!" Bells ring. Flambeaux wave about in the streets. All is levity and jollity, with bells ringing amidst the laughter and singing.*

*(Of course, this "mirth in funeral" contrasts sharply with the genuine grief expressed upon King George's death, which is about to occur.)*

END OF SCENE

END OF DREAM #2

**IV, Scene xv:** 1952, Norm's Lodgings

*Nerine is in bed. She blinks open her eyes at the unfamiliar surroundings. Nerine tries to sit up but can hardly manage. She looks about, her mouth parched.*

*Nerine trying to* Hello? Is anyone there?  
*moisten mouth*

*Norm appearing in the* G'day. How are you feeling?  
*doorway*

*Nerine hoarse* He's dead. The King is dead.

*Norm* What?

*Nerine whispers, eyes* Could I please have some water to drink?  
*teary*

*Norm* Oh, rightio.

*[Returns with glass of water which he gives to the girl.]*

Yeah, you gave everyone another fright, fainting like that. I

wasn't sure what to do with you, not wanting to cause unnecessary stress with your family, so I brought you back here. You feeling better?

Nerine Yes. ... Thanks ...

*[She sighs, and drinks sips of water]*

Norm Did you have that dream again?

Nerine Oh, yes. I mean, no. That is, I didn't have the **same** dream. Thankfully, it continued.

King John died at the end of it, and everyone was very excited. And the jewels **weren't** lost in The Wash after all. So all this effort on your behalf is just a big waste of time. Sorry to be so blunt about it, of course.

Norm *sits down near the bed* You reckon we've all been wasting our time? But, could you have dreamt about King John without that stuff that we dredged up from the ooze? Think about it from that angle.

Nerine *laughs weakly* No. You're right.

Norm Do you want to get a doctor in? You were KO'ed for quite a long time. What do you think? Or would you rather I drove you home?

Nerine I'm not sure that I understand.

How did I get here again? Did you say?

Norm I drove you here.

Nerine *worried* I don't remember ... How did I get into your lorry? ...

Norm *shrugs shoulders* As you might remember, your wish came true and you fainted again. So I tried to revive you, but not too hard, mind you. The "rubbing-the-hands" trick didn't work. So I carried you out to the truck.

Nerine *confused* But you've had to do that before. Carry me around, I mean. Is

that all you do with your life?

Norm *laughs*

I reckon. I don't mind, though. You don't weigh very much.

Nerine

I've got to think! I'll have to go back there, to find out what you did with the jewels. They've been taken to France. **You've** taken them. That is, Clarin has.

I have to find out what became of them then; where you hid them.

*[Shakes head]*

I'll have to go back into the dream.

Norm *not sure what to say*

Can I get you a cup of tea? Some afternoon tea, perhaps?

Nerine

Yes, please, that would be lovely. But don't go to any trouble. And thanks for looking after me so well.

Norm

No worries. Glad to be of help.

*Norm stands up and moves towards the door. Then, with his hand resting on the architrave, taps his hand on the wall. Norm turns back to look at the girl, who sits innocently in his bed.*

Norm

Do you mind my saying something?

Nerine *careful*

Well, that rather depends on what you intend to say!

Norm

When you pricked your finger last night, you started to talk to me in some queer language. But you knew me.

Nerine

Ah! I probably spoke to you in old Norman French.

Norm

I dunno ... I 'spose so.

And you held onto me, talking all the time. I couldn't understand what you were saying, but it sounded pretty affectionate to me. You started stroking my cheek and I thought you were about to kiss me just before you slipped off into the land of nod.

Nerine *blushing, bites lip* I must tell you the full story sometime.

Norm Last night, you said that we'd been very fond of each other back then, in the old days. I think you might have meant that we were lovers.

Nerine *confused, looks away, blushing* Yes, we are now. That is, we're married now and having a baby.  
Er ... How's that afternoon tea coming along?

*Norm nods and looks as if he is going out of the bedroom. But he doesn't go. For a couple of seconds they look at each other. She smiles sweetly and looks so beautiful that he doesn't seem to have much of a chance. He sighs, scratches his head, then goes back to the bed.*

Norm *low-voiced* Pommie blokes probably do the right thing at a time like this. They'd give it the old "stiff-upper-lip" and go for the tea-caddy until all thoughts of passion have passed over.

Trouble is, I'm not English ...

*Here, he moves in quickly, taking Nerine in his arms and kissing her passionately. She is right in there too, kissing him back with equal ardour. The music is superb, sweeping.*

END OF SCENE

#### **IV, Scene xvi: 1952, The Work Shed At The Wash**

*Nerine and Norm are standing at one of the benches, with a variety of relics from The Wash spread out before them. A world of disappointment is on Nerine's face. She is mechanically pricking herself with the jewels, but nothing is happening. Our music, which spanned into this scene from the last one, fades off.*

---

© October 2011 Property of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE

Norm *laughs* Steady on. You'll get blood all over the place.

Nerine *saddened* I just can't understand it, Norm. When we did this before, these trinkets were fairly jumping off the bench to stab me. You saw it! Now, nothing!

Norm When you get tetanus, you'll wish you'd never seen this lot.

Nerine Thankfully, I've had my shots.

Oh, what can be wrong? Why won't it work?

What if I try it on you?

Norm Hey!

*Norm laughs, as Nerine pokes all kinds of jewels into the back of his hand.*

Norm No, we've had a go at that before, and it didn't work.

Nerine Anything?

Norm Yes.

*[Takes the girl in his arms.]*

I've got **everything**, right here, thanks all the same. I don't need dreams to find my love.

*[They kiss, but then she pulls away.]*

Are you still engaged to that twerp?

Nerine No, of course not. He pretended that **he'd** dropped **me**, which wasn't very gallant, I thought.

Norm Too bloody right! Do you want me to go 'round to his digs and plant him a bunch of fives?

Nerine *giggles* No. I can take that on by myself. Once I told him that there was no chance of getting any lucre, he very quickly backed away. Not much good for my morale, you know. Oh, well ... *c'est la vie!*

Norm *scornful* Money-hungry mongrel. I'm glad you finally saw through him.

Why not send him a filthy note, telling him what a ponce he is.

Nerine I might not put it *quite* like that. As I said, he's probably less relieved than I am.

Norm *holding her close* Some very astute young man, with an eye to the main chance, will snap you up: jewels or no.

Nerine *suddenly sad* I feel so sorry for Father, and for His Majesty. They were both so counting on finding that treasure.

However, if my dream came anywhere close to the truth, then the loot is hidden somewhere in France.

Norm Where to now, then?

Nerine *thinking* The library will be my starting point. The Pelerine family, and more especially one Clarin Pelerine. If necessary, over the Channel and into more libraries there. Quite a task I've given myself, haven't I?

END OF SCENE

#### **IV, Scene xvii:** 1952, Quickly Moving Through A Variety Of Scenes To Progress The Plot

*Over the next few weeks, Nerine pores over books, making notes. She is seen buried in books over a range of libraries and museums, in England and France.*

*Interspersed with this activity, we see scenes of the two lovers, wandering hand-in-hand along the River Thames, standing on a bridge at twilight, in the garden at her home. Light, sweet-and-sour music. They are happy with each other, but this is tainted with sadness that the King's quest is unfulfilled.*

---

© October 2011 Property of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE

END OF SCENE

#### **IV, Scene xviii: 1952, The Wash**

*A car pulls up at The Wash and George Danton (wearing spectacles) gets out, looking around interestedly. He wanders into the shed. Nerine is poring over books then looks up, with a radiant smile.*

Nerine                                George! How lovely to see you! Have you brought Beattie and the baby with you?

*They give each other a kiss on the cheek.*

Danton                                No, no. They're with my mother at Hove of all places. How are you, old bean?

Nerine                                As right as a trivet, to be brutally frank about it. I'll make you a cup of tea, shall I?

Danton                                Only if you want one. Not for me, thanks.

I really need to speak with you, alone, alone, all all alone if possible.

Nerine *worried*                        What is it? Is something wrong?

Danton                                Well, that depends. You tell me what's wrong.

*Nerine grasps Danton's forearm. She looks scared.*

Nerine                                Oh, George. What is it? You look frightfully solemn.

Danton *reassuring*                        Come for a stroll along the beach.

*George Danton strolls along, arm-in-arm with his sister-in-law, who looks at him speculatively.*

*On another part of the beach, the men are working, alongside Norm Yardley. A couple of the men rest on their spades, looking in the direction of Danton and Nerine strolling down the beach in the opposite direction.*

Scotsman                   Aye, that'll be the intended. He's been here before, as I recall.

Norm *frowning*           Who, Fenwick?

Scotsman                   Aye, that'll be the one. Trying to worm his way back into my lady's favours, I've nae doot.

*Norm angrily throws down the tools he holds and heads off determinedly.*

*We speedily return to the part of the beach along which Nerine and George stroll. The camera faces George and Nerine as they stroll aimlessly along the beach. In the background, Norm can be seen marching purposefully towards them.*

Nerine *cajoling*           Come on! Don't be a tease! You haven't dragged me down here to admire the scenery.

Danton                     Your mother was telling Beattie something about nightmares which you'd been having. Ghosts, wraiths and apparitions. She sounded concerned.

Nerine *chuckles*           Oh that! Whenever I pricked my finger on something in that work shed, I went off with King John.

Danton *intense*           King John?

Nerine                     Really, George, I daren't say too much about it, or they'll want to lock me away. Anyway, my moment of glory is over. It doesn't seem to be happening anymore.

*Nerine spots Norm striding purposefully towards her, and she smiles warmly.*

Nerine                     Ah, here's Norm. Hello, Digger.

*Norm is looking George Danton over, his face set tautly, as if about to pick a fight with the stranger. Then Norm's demeanour changes, as he recognizes George from the restaurant. Danton holds back a grin.*

Nerine                     Norm, you remember my brother-in-law, George Danton. He teaches History at Whitefriars College, where he is a professor, and he thrashes the boys regularly.

George, may I re-introduce you to Father's engineer on this project: Norman Yardley. He's Australian, but his command of the English language is rather good.

*The men laugh as they shake hands. Norm relaxes and looks somewhat shame-faced. By now, Nerine has linked her arm around Norm's elbow, such that George looks at the pair of them quizzically.*

Nerine *airily* Well, to continue, I'm really there in the 1200's, you know. The stuff that happened to me **really** happened. Not a dream at all. Father won't hear a word of it, but Mother's rather intrigued.

Oh, it's alright. We can talk in front of Norm. He's my husband back then. A gallant knight who's rescued me from John's harem.

*Danton gives Norm a swift, worried look, to which Norm rolls his eyes, shrugs and grins.*

Danton *to Nerine* Have you spoken to Geoffrey about all this?

Nerine *surprised* Yes, and he blathered on about William the Conqueror and Bishop Odo. Oh, yes, and the Bayeux Tapestry.

*Danton nods, looking down at the sand. Norm and Nerine watch him. Then Danton takes a big breath.*

Danton This is the thing.

When your brother and I were at Whitefriars as teenagers, Beattie's grandfather ... Oh, yes, that would make him your grandfather as well. I mean, his ghost actually ...

*[Danton takes a breath]*

Look, damn it! I'll tell you, but it sounds bloody preposterous. Five of us boys, including your half-brother, were transported back to Hastings in 1066. We all fought in the Battle of Hastings. Actually **fought**. Geoff was a Viking, I was Norman ...

*This is met with dumbfounded silence.*

Danton I know this is too weird to even consider, but this scar I have on





*mouth, shocked* beloved King.

*Nerine heads for her mother's arms. Bessie has been dabbing at her eyes with her hanky. She envelopes Nerine.*

Bessie I know, Pet. He was very unwell. It's probably a miracle that he lasted **this** long.

Nerine *can't take it in* But the Princess ... She's in Africa just now, isn't she?

Roy *nods* Her Majesty (as Princess Elizabeth now is) and her Consort will fly back to England immediately. This is a very sad, sad day for the Family and for Great Britain ...

I'll be going out to the site sometime soon, just to re-assure the men that the project will continue. Rather surprisingly, the whole exercise is helping with shipping channels and so forth. Anyway, I would like you all to don black armbands, and there'll be no parties nor merriment in the house for a couple of weeks.

Bessie Well, naturally. You'd better ring your sister.

*[To the butler]*

Jervis, could you please gather the other servants? Let them know that we will be in mourning for up to a month. I'd better come and give them a quick word of consolation ...

*Bessie and the butler toddle off, murmuring to each other. Nerine moves towards her father, who is about to make a phone call.*

Nerine Daddy, I'd like to come to The Wash with you, when you tell the men. May I?

*Roy nods and begins to dial.*

END OF SCENE

**IV, Scene xix:** 1952, General Views Of Londoners And Other English People Mourning The King's Passing

*The funereal music continues. The camera moves back, back, back.*

*Here follows a melange of views, mostly of people in the streets. We pan the grim faces, the tears, the newspaper headlines, the black armbands for King George. The muffled drums will be exactly the same as we heard in the previous film ("Hastings") when the battle was over and the Saxons carried home their dead. This scene is in direct contrast to the outpourings of joy upon the news of John's death.*

END OF SCENE

**IV, Scene xxi:** 1952 The Gathering Of The Men At The Wash Work Shed

*It's important that Nerine stands near her father, to the side, supposedly out of the way. Norm stands in the middle of the room, with the other men. They exchange a quick loving glance. Markham bravely hands out black armbands to the men, whilst trying to be unobtrusive.*

Cavendish *solemn, but reassuring* Thank you all for sparing a few moments. I know that you're all very busy.

Are we all here? Right!

Well, I'm sure that you are all aware that our beloved King, our kind patron of this project, has passed away last night in his sleep.

*During his speech to the men, Cavendish's voice goes into "background" as we concentrate on what his daughter says.*

Cavendish will express what he believes is their united sadness at the news. Despite losing their Royal sponsor, the project would continue. However, as a mark of respect, the works will be



Nerine *eager, intense* Clarin Pelerine had a wound on his left arm that was made by a dagger, or a small sword. Norm's a man! It wouldn't work with jewellery, you know, with women's stuff. He would bear a scar, as George does!

*Cavendish cannot comprehend his daughter's words; he flummoxes. Norm stiffens and steps forward. Everyone else is confused by her Nerine's outburst.*

Cavendish *looking to* What's that, dear? What are you trying to say?  
Norm *for help*

Nerine *turning to Norm* We didn't try it with a weapon. We used the wrong things. Maggs's jewellery didn't work.

We have to try again, but this time with a **male** artefact. You know, a boy's toy thingummy.

*[Turning back to her father.]*

I'm sure you dredged-up a ... a dagger or some such thing.

*The music now really kicks in.*

*The men in the room shift about nervously, staring at Nerine, confused and somewhat alarmed at the outburst. Nerine then rushes closer to Norm.*

Nerine *frantic* Come on! I have to stick you with the point of our dagger for you to go into the dream. And **you** can find the ruddy jewels!

*Nerine grabs Norm's hand and dashes off to the lumber room, where she was previously pricked by Maggs' jewellery. Norm allows himself to be dragged along but is reluctant.*

Norm What the hell is **this** all about? Hey, steady on!

*Now in the lumber room, Nerine begins her frantic search for the dagger.*

Nerine *talking very fast* You heard what George said, about the Saxon fighting axe.

Well, we don't have an axe, more's the pity, but ...

It's here somewhere. I know it's here because I remember seeing it. Actually, as I recall, it was one of the first things that they

found.

Norm *almost laughing* Hey, settle down! You're getting yourself into a tizzy.

*Nerine gives a triumphant cry, waving about a small sharp Italianate dagger.*

Nerine Here it is! I knew it!

*The dagger immediately flies out of her hand and lands deeply into Norm's left forearm. It goes through both his jumper and shirt sleeves. The music is now electrifying.*

Norm *yells in pain* Bloody hell! Be careful, woman!

*Blood oozes onto Norm's clothing. Both Nerine and Norm stare at the patch of blood, awestruck.*

*Norm becomes giddy and grabs the girl's upper arms so as not to fall.*

Nerine *aghast* Oh, Heavens! Are ... are you alright, Norm? Lord! What have I done!

Norm *speaking in Norman French with subtitles* I can escape to Normandy. But you must stay with my parents, for they will care for you. Don't follow me! Ah! I love you so ...

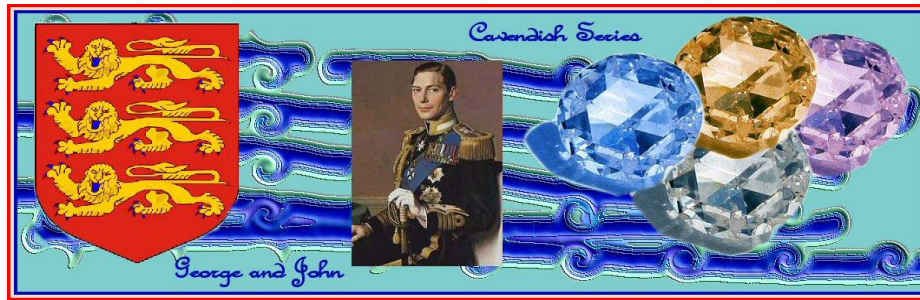
*Norm kisses Nerine very passionately. Then he collapses onto Nerine.*

*Nerine, aghast, can hardly hold the weight of the man. Other men, who had followed the pair and have witnessed the kiss, now rush in to help. We cannot hear them: the music is now overwhelming. We only see the men lowering Norm on to the floor of the work shed and see the girl looking horrified yet elated by what has happened.*

*The music is wild and racy, leading straight to the beach at Normandy at dawn, such that we can segue into Act V.*

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT IV



## ACT V

### V, Scene i: 1216, Normandy In The Early Morning

*The dramatic, over-powering music which ended Act IV now calms down as the camera pans the beach and hinterland of Normandy, in the early morning. The music has become somewhat eerie and mystical, as with the very first chords of Lohengrin.*

*Then the camera sweeps into a ravine in thick woodland. Dank fog and mist rise aesthetically up from the ravine. The camera closes in on Clarin's back, as he lifts his crossbow. On the opposite cliff, a superb stag stands alert, questing the air. Clarin shoots it dead with one arrow, and the magnificent beast slumps immediately to the ground. Clarin drops his bow and looks about for a way to cross the ravine. Then he spots Roland Husier stepping out of the woods where the stag fell.*

*Roland drops onto one knee beside the stag to touch it, caressing its neck and ears. He looks across to the camera/Clarin, but the wisps of mist make it difficult to see.*

Roland *stands*                      *Parlez-vous Anglais, Messire?*

Clarin                                You know me, Sir Roland. I am Clarin Pelerine.

Roland *slight bow*              Ven welcome to France, Sir, and good morning.

I 'ad been stalking vis beast since the sun rose, only to find that you'd shot 'im on my behalf. Nice shot.

*Again, the fog engulfs both men.*

Clarin                                King John is dead. He died of his gluttony, of his canker. No

mortal man took any part in his passing, discounting his own sinfulness.

*There is a long silence as the fog whirls about. Roland's face does not flinch. He pulls the arrow from the beast then breaks it across his knee.*

Clarín King John is dead. His 9-year-old son, Henry Third of that name, will now take the throne. He is guarded by his mother whilst Martin tutors him in the Art of Kingship.

Roland I honour Martin for 'is honesty. For 'is pure love.  
I honour you as well, Sir Clarín.  
To find a knight so 'oly, so akin to my own 'eart and mind is a blessing in vis rotten world.

Clarín *humbly* I thank you, Sir Roland. Your words are uplifting indeed.

Roland I 'ave tied three knots in my girdle, and one is for you. The other two knots, you may 'ave guessed, are for Simon and Walter. I must take your life as you slew Sir Guy. But I shall be sorry to do it.  
The other two, my erstwhile friends, shall be murdered for that they do compass the lives of your wife and your brother.

*The fog sweeps up from the ravine, as we see Clarín mouth the words: "Maggs, Elmer ...".*

Roland Your kinsfolk are making to follow you to France. But I do vow to protect 'em, if I can.

Clarín Sir Guy poisoned Mary. He admitted that to me. Thus, I took justice on him, for your sake.

Roland *fires up* Vat were my province, Knight, to keep faith with my Mary.

Clarín *shouts angrily* For all that he did deny his deed, your friend Guy le Formur obeyed his king and murdered your bride-to-be.

Roland *almost crying* We were given no choice! It was kill or be killed.

Clarín *pointing* He poisoned your love. He had to be taken out.

*More fog and more eerie music.*

Clarín *trying to explain* All I care for, all I've ever cared for, is to become a pilgrim and fight for God's glory in Jerusalem.

Roland *quick, passionate response* Vat is my sole aim, too. If I could reach across this ravine, I would clutch you to my chest and swear eternal, undying loyalty to you, Clarín Pelerine.

But I 'ave to avenge Guy's death! From vat fact, I cannot escape, come what may ...

Clarín Then only one of us will go to the Holy Land, Sir Roland. And that man will be Pelerine.

*Roland stoops to pull the stag into his arms, then hoist it bodily over his shoulders. He stands with great difficulty, struggling under the weight of the stag.*

Roland *turning to leave* I'd better take orf to rescue your lovely wife and crippled brother. Truly, if I can 'old off Simon and Walter, ven by God's Grace I shall do it.

Further, I'll make myself master of this magnificent stag. As I said: Nice shot!

*Roland grins, and waves to Clarín. Then, as he enters the bush, he delivers a final warning.*

Roland *shouts* Take 'eed of my warning.

Love and honour and all good sense cannot 'alt me in my Godly quest. I will come after you. You'll never rest; and I **shall** avenge the murder of Guy.

*Roland, with the stag over his shoulders, stalks off.*

*Clarín watches him depart, his face set hard.*

END OF SCENE

**V, Scene ii: 1216, Martin Counsels Maggs**

In a candlelit, tiny corner of the Pelerine family home, Martin and a heavily pregnant Maggs sit facing each other on small wooden chairs. Martin holds Maggs's hand. The girl looks frightened; her face wet with tears.

Martin *urging*                    It comes to this, Lady Magdelyne: I cannot promise you safe-keeping in the new King's name. Simon and Walter seem to have taken the Law into their own hands and have vowed to seek justice. They are mad with grief over the deaths of the former King and Lord le Formur and have sworn to extract the vilest of vengeance against the Pelerines in supposed recompense for their loss.

Maggs *weeping*                But why? Whatever have we done?

*Martin draws a ragged breath, as he absently strokes Maggs' hand and arm. He seems to be deliberating.*

Martin                            The thing is, little Maggs, that our King-once-that-was had the Plantagenet devil in no small proportion running through his veins. You must have seen him so.

*Maggs makes a fatalistic gesture.*

Martin                            It was at his command that your husband executed Sir Guy. There was a solemn oath --

Maggs                            I understand. You are trying to say that Simon le Maistre and Walter de Quincy are honour-bound to slay my husband in revenge. Is that it?

Martin *urgent*                    And not just Sir Clarin. Mayhap they will turn their bloodlust onto you, and the unborn child, dear Lady.

Maggs *reasonable*              But my husband cannot possibly have been implicated in the King's death.

Martin                            He has the King's property on his person, given him by King

John for safekeeping. Those two cut-throats want it back.

*Maggs looks lost and stares vacantly into space.*

END OF SCENE

### **V, Scene iii:** 1216, Late Evening At The Wash, And Aboard The Small Boat

*[The end for Maggs and Elmer.]*

*With darkness almost upon them, the heavily-pregnant Maggs (who is wrapped in a blanket) and Elmer, are assisted onto a small boat. We are at The Wash. The wind howls. The sea is choppy. The little boat tosses from side to side. The music expresses the wild hopelessness of the Pelerines' journey.*

Martin *voice-over*            You must not think to travel to France alone, my dear. Is there not a brother who might accompany you there? Elver ... or Elmer, is it not? Or is it that he is too ill to travel ... ?

*On the small boat, which is now ploughing the waves on its way to Normandy, the crew-members shout to the passengers. They are instructed to go below.*

Clarín *voice-over*            Do not follow me to France, my love. It is not safe.

Martin *voice-over*            These men will exact a terrible revenge. You do not know how evil they are.

*Descending below deck, Maggs and Elmer are transfixed by the golden glow of candle-lit lanterns in the confines of the tiny cabin. They seem to be happy to make themselves comfortable for the crossing. The boat lurches from side to side on the choppy seas.*

King John *voice-over*        We are your King! We order you to take these precious jewels and --

*There is a hue and cry from above, which is loud enough to be heard above the wind. Elmer and Maggs appear to be worried and alarmed. Before they can discuss the possible cause for the riot, the*

*hatch swings open and Simon, closely followed by Walter, descend menacingly. Maggs screams, while Elmer makes a vain effort to protect her. Both Pelerines are savagely slaughtered.*

*Clearly, the men are set on finding King John's jewels. Maggs has placed her few trinkets in a cloth bag. Simon rifles through that bag, then disgustedly chucks the contents out of the boat into The Wash.*

*[It is these trinkets which Nerine handles in earlier scenes, at the work shed at The Wash.]*

*After pulling the cabin apart, Walter swings angrily around, facing Simon. Both men suck in the big breaths.*

Walter *spitting venom*      They are not here! But I would have sworn that Pelerine would have left the loot with his Dame.

Simon *equally angry*      Where then are they?

*Walter is lost. He looks about for inspiration.*

Walter *breathing fast*      Where then are they?

Is it likely that the King's new favourite is so set up in his own conceit that he would flaunt these baubles in our faces?

Simon                      You do think, then, that the scoundrel has them with him?

*Walter scowls, still seeking inspiration from the golden glow of the candlelight.*

*He strides out of the cabin, up the steep steps, bristling with anger.*

Walter                      Come then, le Maistre. We will bring this bright boy to heel.

*Simon watches Walter clamber up the steps. Then, he follows.*

END OF SCENE



Walter                   Some prick of a farmhand will have noted an English messire riding by with bulging saddlebags.

Simon                   I say that he will be with the Duc!

Walter                   And I say not! He is not so dull as to hide out in the one place where we surely must search for him.

No! This alley cat is a shrewd beast. Our net will need to be cast high and wide to find him. But find him, we will!

*Simon moves away from Walter, angry and desperate.*

Ostler *voice-off*       My lord! There is a farm-girl without who has some news for the English Lord le Maistre.

*Simon and Walter stiffen, then look at each other.*

Simon *uncertain*       Perhaps ... ?

Walter *off-hand*       Yes! Yes! Do you go and find out what the wench knows, Simmy.

*The friends part. Simon walks quickly to a gate. He swings himself through. A young wench in a tattered cloak stands shivering in bare feet a few metres away. Simon smiles broadly, making to approach her.*

*As he steps forward, Roland leaps out at him, slitting his throat with military precision. The wench begins to weep. Roland chucks some gold coins towards her, then disappears, leaving Simon's body in a heap on the ground.*

*Within the stable area, Walter whistles absently as he examines a horse which is stabled there. Without looking around, and on hearing what he presumes are Simon's footsteps, he speaks to Simon.*

Walter                   Well? Was it news of Pelerine?

Roland *quiet but provocative*       Not really, Sire. It was more about ve crows circling over all our 'eads.

*Walter almost jumps out of his skin. Roland draws his sword and braces himself for the impending fight. Walter, equally tense, draws his sword. Both men size each up, in the manner of boxers. Then they thrust and parry.*

*Walter laughing*                      This is not a fair fight, Husier. You are known to be the finest swordsman in all of England.

*The pair continue to fight. Walter is scared. He begins to bring in dirty tricks. Roland fights cleanly.*

*Walter puffing*                      Put up your sword, Rolly, and let's talk.

*The fight moves out of the stables and into the yard. Several bystanders watch the battle in awe. Clearly, Roland is the superior swordsman. Walter is tiring and losing his nerve.*

*Walter screams*                      For God's sake, say something! I hate your wretched silence!

*The fight goes on. This is a real, old-fashioned, exciting sword-fight, with Walter trying every trick in the book, whereas Roland seems to be toying with him.*

*Walter panting and almost sobbing*                      Has our friendship come to this? Can you not end it?

*Pinning Walter to a wall, Roland neatly disarms him then pushes his face close to Walter's. Walter is afraid, weeping and shaking.*

*Roland menacing*                      Get down on your knees. You will die in prayer, de Quincy.  
And I will take care of Clarin de Pelerine on your behalf. Ve jewels I'll return to England, to ve Crown.

Vat's what you had intended, was it not, dear Walter?

*Walter sobs openly now. He cannot say "Yes", so merely nods his head vigorously. Then he whispers his prayers in Latin (with head bowed) as he sinks indecorously to his knees.*

*Roland slays Walter quickly, by bringing his sword sharply down through Walter's neck and into his spine. Walter makes violent staccato movements in his death throes.*

*Roland sheathes his sword, then touches the knots on his girdle.*

END OF SCENE

---

© October 2011 Property of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE

**V, Scene vi:** 1216 The End Of Roland And Clarin, In The Primeval L'Ardoyne Woods, Normandy.

**ACTION**

*There is a tremendous thunderstorm, and a horse chase (very exciting) which is lit by the lightning. Clarin on horseback is chased by Roland, also on horseback through the forest at L'Ardoyne.*

*Beside a young tree in a dip in the ground, Clarin is thrown from his horse when a large, brilliant bolt of lightning spooks his horse. The horse rears dramatically, then almost breaks its legs scrambling in a badger hole which is situated in the hollow.*

*Clarin is stunned, such that he has no time to scramble to his feet. Roland pulls up his horse at the tree, and dismounts. Rain spatters on him. He can see that Clarin is disabled. When Clarin speaks, he looks up, wincing in pain.*

Clarin *in agony*                      How did you -- agh! -- My God, how did you know where to find me?

*Without answering Clarin, Roland kneels in the mud, and takes up a praying position, with his back turned on Clarin. Roland prays in a humble whisper such that Clarin cannot hear him. His accent no longer twangs in the Cockney style.*

Roland                                  Dear God,  
  
Take Thou Thy servant, Clarin de Pelerine to Thy bosom, and cradle him with the angels on high.  
  
Of all men on this temporal Earth, this man was my brother, my soul, my other part. He comprehended my Holy calling. Had our lives taken different paths, he would always have been my friend.

*Roland touches the girdle, fingering the knots tied thereon. The roar of King Phillip's dragon is heard in the woods. Roland ignores the terrible sound. He is weeping.*

Roland *shaking voice* Lord! Hear my prayer!

It is Your Divine will that Your humble servant, Roland Husier, must deliver this man to Heaven, to sit at Your right hand. So shall I do.



*The dragon roars again. It is nearer now.*

*Roland drags himself to this feet. He plods over to where Clarin has tried to wriggle down into the badger hole. We can hear Roland weeping. And the dragon, now very close, roars again. Solemnly, Roland raises his sword, then delivers the death stroke to Clarin. Thinking the younger man dead, he kneels to touch Clarin's face. Clarin, who has not heard the words of affection, springs to life and plunges his dagger deep into Roland's chest. As Roland's dying form slumps on top of Clarin, the camera angle changes. Now, King Phillip's dragon appears in the background, breathing fire.*

*Roland is dead, his dead weight lying on Clarin, who is mortally wounded. Clarin grunts and groans as he attempts to wriggle out from under the dead man.*

|                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Heavenly Angels: Maggs, Elmer, Roland and the Unborn Child.</p> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|

*A heavenly spectre appears in the sky, calming the dragon immediately. In fact, the dragon appears to bow to the heavenly glow. Maggs, Elmer and a newborn baby appear as angels. Smoothly, they glide to Earth, indifferent to Clarin's struggles. These angels take Roland by the hands, such that he stretches up to become an angel, too. These four angels ascend into the ether, in the midst of a beautiful shaft of light. The scene must include a close-up of Clarin's unborn child (represented as the tiny baby) to get maximum weepy effect.*

Clarin *at his last gasp* Maggs! Elmer! Take me ... take me ...

|                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------|
| Clarín if Finished Off By King Phillip's Dragon. |
|--------------------------------------------------|

*As Clarín dies, moaning in pain, the assumption is that he is not bound for Heaven. The storm abates, as the dragon thumps into view. As it roars terrifyingly, we see the fire stream from its open jaws, setting the tree on fire, and we hear Clarín scream.*

*King Phillip's dragon throws back its head to roar. (This is symbolic: England's territories in the current country we know as France were eventually to fall back to France.) At some point in this scene, the dragon will strike that exact pose seen amongst the drawings which Nerine had shown to King George.*

*Then the dragon heads off, swishing its enormous spiked tail, back to the primeval forest of L'Ardoyne.*

*A peaceful silence invades the scene. Even the sky seems to clear.*

*The camera closes in on the place where Clarín died. He has evidently burrowed back down into the badger hole on the appearance of the dragon. Only his charred hand can be seen extended outside the burrow. The sound of creaking wood is heard, then the "whoosh" of falling branches.*

*A lone flute provides the only sound: a mournful, thoughtful little tune, which echoes earlier happy music, when Clarín and Maggs danced with King John.*

*Our camera must close in on the branches: in the next scene, in the hospital, Norm's bedspread will be made of material where the design and colour echo this last scene.*

SEGUE DIRECTLY INTO THE 1952 SCENE

**V, Scene vii: 1952, A Neat Hospital Ward In Oxford**

*Norm wakes suddenly from his dream, with a frightened gasp.*

*Nerine is sitting beside his hospital bed, reading old French poetry. She smiles. He looks about in a confused manner then focuses on her. Without difficulty, he throws back the covers and jumps out of bed, hauling her to her feet so that he can hold her, kissing her wildly and trying to speak.*

Norm                                   Am I dead and in Heaven?

*Nerine loves the comfort of Norm's arms about her.*

Nerine                                I don't think so. What happened?

Norm                                You all went up to Heaven in a blaze of glory, leaving me to face the wrath of King Phillips's dragon.

Nerine                                Gosh!

Norm *holding his face*        I just copped a sword in the guts. I can still feel the cold steel going into me.

Nerine                                How ghastly for you! Who ... who killed you? Was it an accident?

Norm                                Roland. It was Roland ... and the dragon.

I'll tell you all about it. Oh, God! I'm done in!

Nerine                                Back to bed with you. I'll ring for a cup of tea.

*[She does so]*

And are you hungry?

Norm                                Yeah. Tea and a couple of ham sangers would go down well.

*Norm sighs, staring forward, then covers her hands with his hands.*

Norm                                Shit! Sorry ... pardon my French, as they say. Talk about a bad dream!

Nerine                                So ... what happened to me? Am I dead, too?

*Norm laughs slightly then rubs the back of her hand.*

Norm Yes, my darling. I'm so sorry. You and Elmer were murdered by those scoundrels, Walter and Simon. Roland thankfully polished them off. Then it was just a dragon, me and Roland. I think we really understood one another, even though he swore to finish me off.

Nerine The suspense is killing me, Norman.

Norm Ya know, it's funny. Clarrie and Roland only wanted to go on a crusade ... they all did. It was like the pinnacle of their existence. For them, the Holy Land was the centre of the Earth, and to free Jerusalem from the Saracen was what they lived for. And none of them made it. Yet, a whole lot of us blokes went to the Holy Land during the War, not caring tuppence whether we did or didn't. Isn't that strange?

Nerine Yes. King John wanted to follow in his brother's footsteps and prepared for a mammoth pilgrimage. At a time when all his resources were needed to fight the French. So, come on, enough stalling. *What happened?*

Norm It all took place in Normandy. Clarrie was on the run with the Plantagenet jewels, headed for his destiny in the L'Ardoyne forest.

Roland was unaware that John was dead, until I told him. His quest was to square up for the murder of Guy by killing me. But funnily enough, Roland took it upon himself to guard you and Elmer against Walter and Simmy. He just got there too late.

Nerine Bit grim! How did we die?

Norm *covering-up the horrible truth* I'm not sure ... you drowned. Pushed out of the boat in the Channel.

So, Roland knocked-off your murderers. Then, he stuck his sword in me. I didn't ... that is Clarrie didn't die straight away. With one last burst of energy, he killed Roland.

Just when everyone thought they were safe, along comes a bloody dragon who finds me and torches me. Any rate, everyone's dead, except for that religious bloke. End of story.

Nerine They all killed each other, even though they'd sworn to defend their lives to the death. And only Martin survived, at the Queen's side.

Norm Yup.

*[The tea and food are brought in]*

Thanks, mate.

*[Offers food to Nerine, but she refuses. He starts to eat.]*

How long have I been out of it?

Nerine Not too long. About four, no perhaps five hours.

Norm And you've been here all along?

*[She nods. And he continues to eat.]*

Let's get hitched.

Nerine Of course, if you want to. In a way, we're already married.

Norm *smirks* You mean because we had a couple of naughties?

*Nerine laughs, playfully smacking Norm's arm.*

Nerine No! I meant that we were married before, as Clarin and Maggs.

Norm Well this time we'll take bloody good care not to get bumped off.

Nerine I jolly-well hope so! Oh, and by the way ... the treasure? What

became of those jewels? That's probably the most important thing of all.

Norm The jewels ... nuh, they were wrapped in a leather bag and stuffed down the front of my jerkin. Roland's sword hit the bag of jewels, thereby impaling me in the belly rather than in the heart. That's how I managed to get a clear shot at him. The fatal blow ... Good upon you, Clarrie, my boy!

Nerine Why do you persist in calling him *Clarrie*? His name was *Clarin*.

Norm Nah, that's a bit poofy for me. Besides, I knew a bloke called Clarrie. Played cricket for Wollara. He wasn't too bad, either. Spin bowler.

Nerine Alright, Clarrie, then. Back to the point at hand. So the Plantagenet jewels are who knows where. Somebody might have found your body in the woods and helped themselves to the loot. Or buried them with your remains. What a damnable nuisance! Yet, from all historical perspectives, they were **never** found.

Norm *shrugs shoulders* Someone has them stashed away in their attic. Who knows? I want to go back home. Will you be happy about living in Sydney? And will your Dad let you marry a no-hoper like me, living on the other side of the world?

Nerine I wouldn't call you a no-hoper. The Pater will just have to get used to it. ...

I'm really upset and confused that the jewels are missing. Even if they were sold off in 1217 or thereabouts, they'd by now have found their way into a collection **somewhere**. And all that work for nothing ... King George had his heart set on finding them.

Norm Did I ever tell you that I met the King once? Nice bloke.

Nerine God, I cringe every time I think of that. You slapping His Majesty on the shoulder and calling him "mate". You'd better not do that to Queen Elizabeth if you ever meet her.

Norm It's going to seem funny having a Queen. Are you off now?

Nerine *smiling* Mm-hmm. I need my beauty sleep if I'm to be married. Shall we splice the knot here or Down Under?

Norm Wait until I talk to your folks. Your Mum might want to run the show, and my people might like to come on a jaunt to merry old England.

Can you ask Markinson to drop by and see me? Today if possible. They'll probably chuck me out of here once I've seen the doctor. And I need to see Mr Markinson quite urgently.

Nerine Alright. And Father? You'll have to ask his permission.

Norm *off-handed* Yeah, sure. But Markinson first.

~~~~~ Break ~~~~~

Norm is asleep when Markinson and Cavendish arrive. We see them from behind, as we look over their shoulders at Norm. He blinks his eyes open.

Norm Ah, g'day gentlemen. I'm back in the land of the living.

Cavendish I've been told that you wish to marry my daughter.

Norm Absolutely, Sir. But first things first.

Leo: you and I need to go to France. To Normandy. Is that something that we can arrange rather quickly?

Mark To France?

Norm *nods* It's just a hunch. No promises, but I reckon I can find something that we've all been looking for.

Cavendish What's that?

Norm It's in a badger hole. Maybe ...

END OF SCENE

V, Scene viii: 1952, Normandy. In A Large National Park

This park is the French equivalent of Crown Land.

In an old wartime truck sit Norm (driving), Cavendish and Markinson. It is late afternoon and the mist is setting in. An old Norman forest is very eerie and dank. There is no music: adding to the ethereal eerie feel.

A gnarled old Frenchman has closed the gate. Cavendish winds down the window and asks the bloke in hesitant French if they can go in. They have a letter from the Commissioner. The French man is dawky: open-mouthed and uncertain. He looks at the letter, and mutters. He hands it back to Cavendish.

Old man *speaks in French with subtitles* Your orders seem to be okay. I don't know. You see, the park is closing now. It is closing time. Alright, then, but try to get out of there before nightfall, will you? One gets lost so easily in the dark, and no moon tonight. This gate will be shut and I'll be gone home. Close it after you, will you?

And he opens the gate to wave them through.

Now the music hums into the scene, as the truck winds through the forest, which gets thicker and thicker.

Norm I'll get out and wander about. Markinson, take the wheel, if you don't mind. I've got to get my bearings.

Cavendish is pouring over a map as the drivers change over.

Cavendish *peev*ed Which way is North? I can't read this infernal French map.

Markinson leaps to his boss's aid. For a few seconds, Norm whistles absently through his teeth, looking about himself for inspiration.

Out of the truck window, Markinson offers him a flask of brandy.

Markinson Need a heart-starter, Yardley?

Unthinkingly, Norm takes a swig, wiping his hand over his mouth. He hands the flask back with a brief thanks, then trudges off, the truck crawling along in his wake.

The mist and fog swirls over the ancient paths. Norm takes a bearing from his surroundings, then trudges off into the woods, leaving the path.

The truck stops and the two occupants alight. They look in the direction Norm is taking.

Cavendish He's off in his own little world.

Markinson It would seem so.

Sir, if you would follow him so that we don't lose sight of him, whilst I grab the equipment and catch up with you both. Does that sound like a plan?

Cavendish nods, frowning, then troops off into the woods.

In the very thickest part of the woods, Norm stops looking up.

Norm *through clenched teeth* Come on, George Norman: remember!

FLASHBACK:

Norm relives that part of the dream where he was chased into the woods, on horseback.

The horse falling, the searing pain of the sword in his belly, the feeling of helplessness as he is lying under Roland's dead body, the fire of the dragon as it bears down on him.

Close-up of Norm's face. He now wears a determined, certain look. He marches forward deliberately, with the other two men following.

Norm finds a large tree, which he slaps many times, thinking and looking about. There are marks of ancient scorching on the trunk. He touches these. He looks back from the tree towards the hills. A small dip in the earth can be discerned.

Norm *confident* This is it.

Cavendish Are you sure?

Norm Yes. Absolutely. I died here. Or at least the other chap did.
This is the spot alright.

Cavendish walks up to stand beside him. Norm addresses Cavendish.

Norm *looking at Cavendish* My horse tripped in a badger hole and came down, tossing me in the process. The hole was here, at the foot of this tree. It was smaller then, the branches closer to the ground.

Cavendish Over 700 years ago. I suppose it's possible ...

Norm Too right! But I don't want to get people's hopes up. Look, I didn't exactly tell my fiancée the absolute truth.

Cavendish *evil smirk* Not a tremendously propitious start to married life.

Norm What happened was that the swag was on me, stuffed into my jerkin. That's why Roland's thrust didn't kill me straight away. I was wearing a leather jerkin. He wouldn't have killed me at all if he'd aimed for my heart, over which the loot was stashed. If it hadn't been so stormy and fierce, he would have seen the bulge in my clothes.

I told Nerine that. That bit's true.

Cavendish *uncomfortable* I don't believe in all these rubbishy dreams. You'll wind up deranged if you continue to talk about your death in this way. I'm not letting my only daughter marry a lunatic, you

know.

Norm *not put off* Fair enough. But we all need to understand why I think the jewels might be here.

[Turns to Markinson]

Over here, mate. If you wouldn't mind ...

As Markinson steps up, Norm reaches over imperatively for the spade, and immediately begins digging. He talks to the men as he digs.

Norm *digging* The wife and brother had turned into beautiful angels, who carted Roland off. It was ... what's the word I'm after? Ethereal.

Anyway, the dying Clarrie pushed the stash down deep into the hole, thinking, or rather hoping that the angels would come for him, too. I suppose he thought it might make him too heavy to lift. Or that earthly treasure didn't belong in Heaven.

[Laughs]

People think stupid things when they're dying, don't they?

So, anyhow, this is where it still is, unless someone has dug it up.

Markinson Might not the men who buried Clarin Pelerine have found it?

Norm Maybe. Maybe not. Dunno. One way to find out, though. Just keep digging, eh?

Norm continues to dig rhythmically as the music mounts into expectation mode.

Norm Here we go, Leo! What's this, then?

Norm brings up a piece of skull, which he holds towards Leo.

Norm What's the bet that that isn't *my* noggin.

[Chucking the skull to Leo]

Catch!

The other two step back, appalled, allowing the skull to roll on the grass.

Cavendish *put out* I say, steady on!

Norm digs on, finding more bones, to the continued disgust and awe of the two other men. Norm is really excited, digging down and scrabbling in the dirt.

Norm, *triumphant* Gotcha!

Norm scrambles out of the hole he has dug, with music really kicking in now, and throws a dirty object the size of a rag doll onto the grass at Cavendish's feet.

Markinson *awestruck* Are these ... ? Are they ...?

Norm I'll do the honours, if you like, as my hands are already
dirty.

Cavendish leans forward, whereas Markinson and Norm both squat. The leather of the bag is quite mouldy and disintegrated. Inside are more wrappings. Norm carefully pulls the package open and the Plantagenet jewels (very dirty) spill over the ground. The other two are wide-eyed and astounded, Norm grins, running his fingers through the pieces, as the music reaches a magnificent crescendo.

Norm *somewhat muted* Gentlemen, these are, if I'm not mistaken, King John's
jewels which were supposedly lost in The Wash.

Norm looks at Lord Cavendish, grinning broadly.

Norm *cheeky* Stone the bloody crows, eh?

END OF SCENE

V, Scene ix: 1952, A Brightly Decorated Ballroom.

Very happy crowd in a brightly decorated room. A lively dance band, loads of streamers and balloons. Norm and Nerine dance the foxtrot, laughing, obviously having a great time. They wear gold paper crowns. Nerine sports a diamond engagement ring.

Cavendish and Bessie watch them fondly. Bessie glances about, to ensure that her following words are not overheard.

Bessie *sotto voce* When shall I be able to see them?

Cavendish *sotto voce* They're being cleaned. Put them in a display case at the Museum, I've no doubt. Geoffrey is assisting me. We're planning to put it out that the jewels turned up **because of** His Late Majesty's project.

Bessie *in full agreement* That's not a lie at all!

Cavendish Exactly! The Palace received the fullest co-operation from the French, with all necessary secrecy maintained. It really couldn't have been a better outcome.

Bessie *arch* And have you apologized to your younger daughter yet for not believing her?

Cavendish *bluff* Certainly not! Ghost stories indeed! Hmph!

Bessie Then how do you explain --

Cavendish Lucky guess.

Bessie *thoughtful* It's funny, isn't it? First Geoffrey, and then Nerine. Apparently my poor old father made some sort of prediction.

Cavendish *snorts* Don't wish to discuss it, my dear.

Bessie *to herself* Some sort of prediction that there would be another one, a relative of Geoffrey's ...

Cavendish *with finality* I don't hold with all this tosh.

Lord Cavendish turns to his lovely wife and proffers her his arm.

Cavendish *smiling* I want to give you a whirl around the floor before midnight, when it's predicted that I'll turn back into a pumpkin.

Bessie *laughing* Alright!

The Cavendish's disappear into the dancing crowd. We see George and Beatrice dancing, Norm and Nerine, and Geoffrey and Julia. The music is bright and jolly. We close in on the punchbowl, and the man whose back is turned to us swings around to watch the dancing. He smiles benignly on the happy couples: this man is played by the same actor who plays Martin of Lambden. The man appears to be extremely pleased with his surroundings.

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT V

END OF FILM

© October 2011 Property of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE

THIS DOCUMENT IS SOLELY OWNED BY QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE and is intended solely for use as an entertainment. QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE retains exclusive and inalienable rights to this document, which may not be reproduced in any way without the express authorisation and permission of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE. Any disclosure, reproduction, copying, distribution, or other dissemination or use of this document or of the intellectual property contained in this document is strictly prohibited without the express authorisation and permission of QUEENSLAND TRUCKIE'S MATE. (www.qld-tm.net.au)